My Life in Christ

John Sergieff
"Father John"

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MY LIFE IN CHRIST

OR

Moments of Spiritual Serenity and Contemplation, of Reverent Feeling, of Earnest Self-Amendment, and of Peace in God:

"SAYING AND DOING ALWAYS SUCH THINGS AS SHALL WELL PLEASE THEE."
Prayer before the Reading of the Gospel at the Divine Liturgy.

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF THE MOST REVEREND

JOHN ILIYTCH SERGIEFF

("FATHER JOHN"),

OF ST. ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL, CRONSTADT, RUSSIA

Translated, with the Author's sanction, from the Fourth and Supplemented Edition

BY

E. E. GOULAEFF,

ST. PETERSBURG.

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DEDICATION.

To

HER ROYAL AND IMPERIAL MAJESTY

VICTORIA,

QUEEN OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,

EMPRESS OF INDIA,

ETC. ETC. ETC.

Your Majesty,

The grievous affliction that Russia and the Russian people, ever devoted to their Sovereigns, sustained in October, 1894, by the premature recall of their revered, lamented, and beloved Emperor Alexander III. unto the abode of the righteous, found a sympathetic echo in the gracious heart of your Majesty.

Your Royal and Imperial Majesty was pleased to show your regard for the memory of the deceased great monarch, "the Prince of Peace," and for the religion which the late Emperor professed, by desiring that, on the day of his funeral, one of the finest chants from the Burial Service of the Russian Orthodox Church should be sung in your language in your chapel at Windsor.

This kindly and gracious action emboldens me to lay at your Majesty's feet, and to dedicate to your Majesty, my own humble

and imperfect translation into the English language of the important work entitled "My Life in Christ," the author of which is the well-known Father John Sergieff, of Cronstadt, who was present at his Majesty's last moments in Livadia, and was witness of his departure unto the life eternal. Father John's account of these last moments is given in the latter part of my preface to this work.

I sincerely trust that this book will be found helpful to every true Christian, irrespective of differences of creed, nationality, race, or colour.

Your Majesty's
Most respectful and humble servant,
E. E. GOULAEFF.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

In order to introduce the author of this book, the Reverend John Sergieff, to English readers, I consider it well to reprint from the *Times* of the 13th January, 1891, the following account of the Jubilee celebration of the 35th anniversary of the entry into the Orthodox ministry of this most remarkable and popular man :—

"Father Ivan, or John of Cronstadt, known and revered in every nook and corner of Russia, has hitherto been almost entirely unknown to English readers; but a circumstance just reported to the British chaplain at Cronstadt seems to indicate that the Christian influence of this remarkable priest of the Russian Church has at last found its way even into the United Kingdom. A short time ago a letter reached the British clergyman at Cronstadt, addressed in English to the parish priest of that port. It came from a correspondent in county Kerry, Ireland, and earnestly begged for the prayers of Father John on behalf of the writer, who appeared to be in great distress of mind and body. His letter is being translated, and will be forwarded to the reverend pastor.

"This is a curious proof of the influence and reputation of this wonderful man, who, in the midst of his Russian surroundings, seems to approach in these days to the first Apostles. He is, indeed, a true physician of the Gospel. His extraordinary healing powers, and the spiritual and bodily cures effected by the faithful acceptance of his earnest consolations, are attested on all sides by many sorts and conditions of men. To those who believe in Father John—and their name is legion—the age of miracles is not yet over. Crowds press round him whenever he leaves his humble abode, and are happy if they can only touch the hem of his modest garb. Father John's life is one of uninterrupted and self-sacrificing charity and Christian ministration among the poor, the sick and the needy; not, however, refusing his presence and prayers to the well-to-do and rich, who send for him when other help fails, and never in vain, from all parts of the country. He has no vast business organisation of charity, and no corybantic Christianity, like 'General' Booth, and no religious politics, like Archbishop Nicanor of Odessa. Although enormous sums of money have passed through his hands

to the Russian poor in all directions, he is still a poor man, living in the humblest possible way. Steamboats and trains in which he journeys to and fro on his truly Christian work are besieged with such crowds that the police have to protect him from their pressure.

"The report of his appearance in any house in St. Petersburg—and the news spreads like wild-fire—brings throngs of poor people, running madly from all the surrounding streets, to get within the range of his healing presence, to receive his blessing, or to implore his attendance at the sick-bed of relatives or friends.

"He advocates no impracticable Christian theories like Tolstoy; his life is one entirely of good works, and his influence for good among the Russian masses, who have not yet reached the state of cynical unbelief of the lower orders in other countries, is greater, perhaps, than of any Russian under the Czar.

"The festival in his honour at Cronstadt, an island most difficult and inconvenient of access in winter, was attended by great crowds of people, rich and poor, who made their way across the ice of the gulf to the isolated island, from St. Petersburg and other places. Thirty priests officiated at the Church service on the occasion, and deputations from various benevolent and other societies, including even one of beggars, presented the reverend Father with gifts of silver-bound Bibles and Holy pictures. The most touching sight of all was the gift of a small bunch of flowers by a poor sickly woman, with a child in her arms. An eye-witness states that the crowd and Father John were moved to tears. At a banquet in the evening, at which the Governor and the Admiral of the Port presided, paupers, mendicants, and moujiks sat cheek by jowl with ladies, officials, and naval officers to drink the health and long life of Father John."

These lines were written in 1891, by the able *Times* correspondent in St. Petersburg, Mr. Dobson. Beyond fully endorsing this account of the remarkable and charitable life of the Reverend John Sergieff, very little remains for me to say on the subject. Indeed, since the appearance of the above correspondence the power of Father John's prayers for the sick and needy, far from diminishing, has become, if possible, still more efficacious.

His faith in God is the very same of which Christ spoke: "Verily, I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain: 'Be thou removed and be thou

cast into the sea,' it shall be done." (St. Matthew xxi. 21.) And not a single day passes without the truth of these glorious and comforting words of Christ's being proved by some sick person, who has asked for Father John's prayers. Thus, quite recently the following account appeared in one of the St. Petersburg papers :—"In the pious family of a prince in St. Petersburg, in the presence of many witnesses, Father John entered the house at the request of the parents, to visit their daughter, who had kept her bed for four months, having lost the use of her feet. He prayed, with all those present for her, and afterwards, touching the sick girl, he said to her: 'Believe, and rise up;' and she, believing, rose up, walked across the room, and recovered." To show that the healing power of Father John's prayers of faith is independent of great distances, I will here give the following instance, described in the recently published book :—

"AN ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE AND ACTS OF FATHER JOHN OF CRONSTADT.

"In October, 1889, in Moscow, in the family of a certain Mr. S—ff, two children fell ill with diphtheria. Notwithstanding the measures at once taken, the illness developed rapidly and increased. A consultation of doctors was held, and it was decided to resort to tracheotomy. One can imagine the despair of the children's parents. Having lost hope in human aid, they sent a telegram to Father John of Cronstadt, begging for his prayers. The Reverend Father received this telegram in the morning, at the time when he was performing the early Liturgy, and, as he usually does, immediately after reading the telegram, he addressed his earnest prayer to God. Meanwhile, what was taking place in Moscow? It had been decided to perform the operation of tracheotomy at two o'clock on that day, but already at nine o'clock, a.m. (at the very time of Father John's prayers in Cronstadt, some 500 miles away), the doctor who remained on duty noticed an improvement, which progressed as rapidly as the illness had previously developed. The doctors, having assembled at the appointed time of two o'clock p.m., found such certain improvement in the condition of the children that the operation was pronounced unnecessary. In three to four days both children completely recovered."

To conclude my introduction of the author of this book, the Reverend John Sergieff, to English readers, it will not,

perhaps, be out of place to reproduce his letter to the editors of the *St. Petersburg Church News*, dated soon after the recent much-lamented death of the late peace-loving Emperor Alexander III. of Russia, as the letter contains the following lines concerning the last days and moments of this remarkable Emperor, deplored not only in his own country, but also throughout the whole of Europe, as the great "Prince of Peace." Father John wrote as follows:—

"On the 17th of October, 1894, in accordance with the deceased Emperor's desire, I administered the Holy Sacrament to his Imperial Majesty. On those sorrowful days I performed the Liturgy daily, either at the palace church of Livadia, or at the church of Oryanda; and on the day named, just after the celebration of Divine service, I came to the august invalid from the last-named church with the Cup of Life. He partook of the life-giving Holy Sacrament from my hands with deep devotion. On the 20th of October his Imperial Majesty wished to see me again. I hastened to go to him immediately after the celebration of the Liturgy, and remained in his presence until the moment of his peaceful death. By the wish of the Empress, I read the prayer for healing the patient, and anointed him with oil taken from the lamp that burns before a deeply venerated thaumaturgical icon, and supplied by the Reverend Father Alexander of Yalta, by the wish of some pious persons, for the purpose of anointing the august invalid, which ceremony was duly performed. Having received this anointing with sincere faith, the Emperor expressed the wish that I should lay my hands on his head, and when I had done so, his Majesty said to me: 'The people love you.' 'Yes,' I answered, 'your people love me.' Then the Emperor was pleased to say: 'Yes, because they know who you are and what you are.' (His exact words.) Soon afterwards the august patient began to feel some very oppressive fits of asthma, and oxygen was constantly introduced into his mouth. He suffered severely. On his left side was the Empress, before him stood his two elder sons and the bride-elect, on his right side the younger children, the Grand Duke Michael, and the Grand Duchess Olga, whilst at the head of the arm-chair I myself stood. 'Is it not oppressive to Your Imperial Majesty when I hold my hands on your head?' asked I. 'No,' the Emperor was pleased to answer. 'I feel better when you hold your hands over me.' I replied: 'That is because I came directly after the celebration of the Liturgy, carried the most pure Body of Christ in these same hands, and was myself a partaker of the Holy Sacrament.'"

Soon afterwards, speaking concerning the same national loss, Father John afforded great consolation to the orphaned Russian people by saying: "That though the Emperor Alexander III. died, in spite of the earnest, unanimous prayers of the whole people, still they might console themselves by the fact that, thanks to their heartfelt prayers, he died as only a really true Christian could die."

Returning now to the object of this preface, it only remains to me to mention that my main purpose in translating this book, in my opinion very valuable, into English, is to spread throughout the world the principles of life brought forward in it (thanks to the fact that English is spoken by, and is known to, a great many inhabitants of the globe who do not know the Russian language), in order that the counsel given in the book may help its readers, whatever their nationality may be, in their self-amendment in the true spiritual life, and in the strengthening of their faith in our Lord.

In conclusion, I must apologise to English readers for having, notwithstanding my efforts, perhaps failed to reproduce in my translation the simple but beautiful and powerful language of the Russian original.

E. E. GOULAEFF.

NOTE.

I DO not precede my book by any introduction: let it speak for itself. Everything contained in it is but a gracious enlightenment which was bestowed upon my soul by the all-enlightening Holy Ghost during moments of deep self-concentration and of self-examination, especially during prayer. When I had time, I noted down the edifying thoughts and feelings that came to me, and from these notes, continued for many years, this book has now been compiled; the contents are very varied, as will be seen by the readers. Let them judge of them for themselves.

"He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." (1 Corinthians ii. 15.)

THE ARCHPRIEST, JOHN SERGIEFF.

MY LIFE IN CHRIST.

Part I.

"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."—ST. JOHN xvii. 3.

THOU, O God, hast opened wide to me Thy truth and Thy verity. By instructing me in the sciences, Thou hast opened to me all the riches of faith, of nature, and of human understanding; I have learned Thy word——the Word of God—"piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."[1] I have studied the laws regulating the mind of man, its love of wisdom, the formation and the beauty of speech; I have penetrated in part into the mysteries of Nature, into her laws, into the abyss of the creation of worlds and their revolution; I know the population of the terrestrial globe; I have acquainted myself with its different peoples, with the celebrated persons, and their works, who have passed in turn through this world; I have in part studied the great science of self-knowledge and of how to draw nigh to Thee; in a word, I have become cognisant of many, many things—"for more things are shewed unto thee than men understand,"[2] and hereafter I shall yet learn much. I have many books of very varied contents; I have read and re-read them, but still I am not yet satisfied. My spirit still thirsts for further knowledge and my heart is unsatisfied; it hungers, and from all the knowledge thus acquired by the intellect, it cannot gain full happiness. When will it be satisfied? It will be satisfied, when "I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."[3] Until then I shall hunger. "Whosoever drinketh of this water (of worldly wisdom) shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life,"[4] said the Lord.

[1] Hebrews iv. 12. [2] Sirach iii. 23. [3] Psalm xvii. 15.
[4] St. John iv. 13 and 14.

How is it that the saints see us and our needs and hear our prayers? Let us make the following comparison: Suppose that you were transplanted to the sun and were united to it. The sun lights the whole earth with its rays, it lights every particle of the earth. In these rays you also see the earth, but you are so small in proportion to the sun, that you would form, so to say, but one ray, and there are an infinite number of such rays. By its identity with the sun this ray takes an intimate part in lighting the whole world through the sun. So also the saintly soul, having become united to God, as to its spiritual sun, sees, through the medium of its spiritual sun, which lights the whole universe, all men and the needs of those that pray.

Have you learned to see God and represent Him to yourself—as the omnipresent Wisdom, as the living, acting Word, as the vivifying Holy Spirit? The Holy Scripture is the domain of Wisdom, Word and Spirit, of God in the Trinity; in it He clearly manifests Himself: "The Words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life,"[1] said the Lord. The writings of the Holy Fathers are again the expression of the Mind, Word and Spirit of the Holy Trinity, in which the spirit of the higher class (spiritually speaking) of mankind has largely participated; the writings of ordinary worldly men are the expression of the fallen spirit of men, with all their sinful attachments, habits and passions. In the Holy Scriptures we see God face to face, and ourselves as we are. Man, know thyself through them, and walk always as in the presence of God.

As you are aware, man, in his words, does not die; he is immortal in them, and they will speak after his death. I shall die, but shall speak even after my death. How many immortal words are in use amongst the living, which were left by those who have died long ago, and which sometimes still live in the mouths of a whole people! How powerful is the word even of an ordinary man! Still more so is the Word of God: it will live throughout all ages, and will always be living and acting.

As God is the creative, living and life-giving Wisdom, therefore those greatly sin who, by the thoughts of their spirit, turn aside from the Wisdom of the Trinity and occupy themselves with material, perishable things, thus materialising their spirit itself. Especially do those sin who, during Divine Service in church or during their prayers at home, entirely turn aside in their thoughts from God and allow their minds

[1] St. John vi. 63.

to wander in different places outside the church. By doing so they greatly offend God, upon Whom on such occasions our minds should be fixed.

To what end do fasting and penitence lead? For what purpose is this trouble taken? They lead to the cleansing of the soul from sins, to peace of heart, to union with God; they fill us with devotion and sonship, and give us boldness before God. There are, indeed, very important reasons for fasting and for confession from the whole heart. There shall be an inestimable reward given for conscientious labour. Have many of us the feeling of sonlike love to God? Dare many of us, without condemnation and with boldness call upon the Father in Heaven and say: "Our Father!" . . . . Is there not, on the contrary, no such sonlike voice to be heard in our hearts, which are deadened by the vanities of this world and attachments to its objects and pleasures? Is not our Heavenly Father far from our hearts? Is it not rather an avenging God that we should represent to ourselves, we who have withdrawn ourselves from Him into a far-away land? Yes, by our sins all of us are worthy of His righteous anger and punishment, and it is wonderful how long-suffering and forbearing He is to us—that He does not strike us like the barren fig trees. Let us hasten to propitiate Him by repentance and tears. Let us enter into ourselves; let us consider our unclean hearts in all strictness, and when we see what a multitude of impurities are keeping them from the reach of Divine grace, we shall ourselves acknowledge that we are spiritually dead.

The loving Lord is here! how can I let even a shadow of evil enter into my heart? Let all evil completely die within me; let my heart be anointed with the sweet fragrance of goodness as with a balsam. Let God's love conquer thee, thou evil Satan, instigating us, who are evil by nature, to evil. Evil is most hurtful both to the mind and to the body. It burns, it crushes, and it tortures. No one bound by evil shall dare to approach the throne of the God of love.

When praying, we must absolutely subject our heart to our will, and turn it towards God. It must be neither cold, crafty, untruthful, nor double-minded, otherwise what will be the use of our prayers, of our preparation for the Sacrament? It is good for us to hear God's voice of anger: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."[1] So do not

[1] St. Matthew xv. 8.

let us stand in church in a state of spiritual prostration, but let the spirit of each one of us on such occasions burn in its working towards God. Even men do not much value the services which we render to them coldly, out of habit. And God requires our hearts. "My son, give Me thine heart."[1] Because the heart is the principal part of the man—his life. More than this, the heart is the man himself. Thus he who does not pray or does not serve God with his heart, does not pray at all, because in that case his body only prays, and the body without the mind is nothing more than earth. Remember, that when standing in prayer, you stand before God Himself, who has the wisdom of all. Therefore, your prayer ought to be, so to say, all spirit, all understanding.

The saints of God live even after their death. Thus, I often hear in church the Mother of God singing her wonderful, heart-penetrating song which she said in the house of her cousin Elizabeth, after the Annunciation of the Archangel. At times, I hear the song of Moses; the song of Zacharias—the father of the Forerunner; that of Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel; that of the three children; and that of Miriam. And how many holy singers of the New Testament delight until now the ear of the whole Church of God! And the Divine service itself—the sacraments, the rites? Whose spirit is there, moving and touching our hearts? That of God and of His saints. Here is a proof for you of the immortality of men's souls. How is it that all these men have died, and yet are governing our lives after their death—they are dead and they still speak, instruct and touch us?

As the breath is necessary for the body, and as without breathing men cannot live, so likewise the soul cannot truly live without the breath of God's Spirit. As air is necessary for the body, so is the Holy Ghost for the soul. Air has some likeness to the Holy Ghost. As "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."[2]

When you are threatened with temptation to sin, then represent to yourself vividly that sin is exceedingly displeasing to God, Who hates iniquity. "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity."[3] And in order to understand this better, imagine a father, righteous and severe, who loves his family, and is trying by every means to make his children well-principled and upright, in order to reward them afterwards for their good behaviour by the great riches he has laboriously laid up for them, and, who nevertheless

[1] Proverbs xxiii. 26. [2] St. John iii. 8. [3] Psalm v. 5.

sees, to his grief, that the children, disregarding their father's love, do not love him, do not pay attention to the inheritance so lovingly prepared for them by their father, but live disorderly, and rush impetuously to destruction. Mark, that "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death,"[1] because it kills the soul, because it makes us the slaves of the Devil—the destroyer of men; and the more we work for sin, the more difficult will be our return, and the more sure will be our ruin. Dread, therefore, every sin with the whole heart.

When your heart inclines to evil, and the evil one begins to undermine your heart, so that it is completely removed from the rock of faith, then say to yourself inwardly: "I know of my spiritual poverty, my own nothingness without faith. I am so weak, that it is only by Christ's name that I live and obtain peace, that I rejoice and my heart expands, whilst without Him I am spiritually dead, I am troubled, and my heart is oppressed; without the Lord's Cross I should have been long since the victim of the most cruel distress and despair. Only Christ keeps me alive: and the Cross is my peace and my consolation."

We are all able to think, because an unlimited Wisdom (Thought) exists, just as we are able to breathe because unlimited air-spaces exist. This is the reason why bright ideas upon any subject are called inspirations. Our thoughts are constantly flowing conditionally with the existence of the unlimited Spirit of Wisdom (Thought). This is why the Apostle says: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God."[2] This is also why the Saviour Himself says:—"Take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak."[3] Thus you see that the thought and even the word itself (the inspiration) come to us from without. This, of course, in a state of grace and in cases of need. But even in our ordinary state all our bright thoughts come from our Guardian Angel and from God's Spirit: whilst, on the contrary, impure, dark thoughts proceed from our corrupt nature and from the Devil, ever lying in wait for us. How then, should the Christian behave? "God Himself worketh in us."[4] In general, throughout the world we see the Kingdom of thought in the structure of the whole visible world, as also in particular in the earth, in the rotation and the life of the terrestrial globe; in the distribution of the elements—light, air, water, earth, fire (concealed), whilst other elements are diffused in all animals—in birds, fishes, reptiles, beasts, and

[1] James i. 15, and others.
[2] 2 Corinthians iii. 5.
[3] St. Matthew x. 19.
[4] Philippians ii. 13.

men—in their wise and ingenious construction, in their faculties, nature and habits; in plants, in their construction, nourishment, etc.; in a word, we see everywhere the kingdom of thought, even down to the lifeless stone and sand.

Priests of God! learn how to turn the bed of sorrow of the Christian sufferer into one of joy by the consolation of faith; learn how to make him, instead of—in his opinion—the most unfortunate, the happiest of men; assure him that having been "a little chastised he shall be greatly rewarded afterwards,"[1] and you will be the friends of mankind, angels of consolation, instruments or ministers of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

If the fervour of faith in the heart is not sometimes stirred up, then in time, through negligence, faith may become entirely extinguished in us; and Christianity with its Sacraments may entirely die for us. The enemy takes pains to attain this end, and tries to extinguish faith in our hearts and to bury in oblivion all the truths of Christianity. That is why we see men who, being Christians, are only such in name, while by their actions they are quite heathen.

Do not think that our faith is not vivifying to us—pastors—that we serve God hypocritically. No; we before all, and more than all, avail ourselves of God's mercies, and we know by experience what the Lord Himself is to us, His Sacraments, His most pure Mother, and His Saints. For instance, in partaking of the life-giving mysteries of the Blood and Body of the Saviour, we often, often experience in ourselves their vivifying effect, the heavenly gifts of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; we know that the gracious gaze of a king does not rejoice the heart of the least of his subjects as the merciful gaze of our heavenly Master, as His mysteries rejoice our hearts. And we should have been most unthankful to the Lord, and our hearts would indeed have been hardened, had we not tried to make known the glory of God's Life-giving Mysteries unto His beloved, had we not extolled His wonders, accomplished in our hearts during each celebration of the Divine Liturgy. We also experience the effect of the invincible, incomprehensible, divine power of the Lord's glorious and life-giving Cross, and by its power we drive away from our hearts evil passions, despondency, pusillanimity, fear, and other snares of the Devil. The Cross is our friend and benefactor. I say this sincerely, with full belief in the truth and power of these words.

You wish to comprehend the incomprehensible; but can

[1] Wisdom iii. 5.

you understand how the inward sorrows with which your heart is overwhelmed overtake you, and can you find, except in the Lord, the means to drive them away? Learn at first, with your heart, how to free yourself from sorrows, how to ensure peace in your heart, and then, if necessary, philosophise on the incomprehensible, for "if ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?" [1]

Think oftener: Whose wisdom appears in the construction of your body? Who has ordered the laws of your thoughts, so that until now these laws are followed by all men? Who has engraved in the hearts of all men the law of conscience, so that until now it rewards the good and punishes the evil in all men? The Almighty, All-wise, and most gracious God! Thy hand is constantly upon me, a sinner, and there is no moment when Thy mercy leaves me. Grant me, then, always to kiss, with living faith, Thy gracious hand. Why should I go far to seek for the traces of Thy mercies, of Thy wisdom, and Thy omnipotence? O! how clearly these traces are visible to me! I, I myself am a miracle of God's goodness, wisdom and omnipotence. I myself—on a small scale—am a whole world; my soul is the representative of the invisible world; my body—of the invisible one.

Brethren! what is the purpose of our earthly life? It is, that, after our trial by earthly affliction and misfortunes, and after our gradual advancement in virtue, by means of the divine gifts, given to us in the sacraments, we may rest, after our death, in the Lord, the peace of our souls. That is why we sing of the dead: "Grant rest, O Lord, to the soul of Thy departed servant." We wish him to rest in peace, as the limit of all wishes, and pray to God for this. Is it not, then, unwise to grieve much for the departed? "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," [2] says the Lord. Thus our departed ones, who have fallen asleep in a Christian death, come to this voice of God and obtain rest. What is there, then, to grieve for?

Those who are trying to lead a spiritual life have to carry on a most skilful and difficult warfare, through their thoughts, every moment of their life—that is, a spiritual warfare; it is necessary that our whole soul should be every moment a clear eye, able to watch and notice the thoughts entering our heart from the evil one and repel them; the

[1] St. Luke xii. 26. [2] St. Matthew xi. 28.

hearts of such men should be always burning with faith, humility and love; otherwise the subtlety of the Devil finds an easy access to them, followed by a diminution of faith, or entire unbelief, and then by every possible evil, which it will be difficult to wash away even by tears. Do not, therefore, allow your heart to be cold, especially during prayer, and avoid in every way cold indifference. Very often it happens that prayer is on the lips, but in the heart cunning, incredulity or unbelief, so that by the lips the man seems near to God, whilst in his heart he is far from Him. And, during our prayers, the evil one makes use of every means to chill our hearts and fill them with deceit in a most imperceptible manner to us. Pray and fortify yourself, fortify your heart.

If you wish to ask of God in prayer any blessing for yourself, then before praying prepare yourself for undoubting and firm faith, and take in good time means against doubt and unbelief. For it will go ill with you if during the prayer itself your heart wavers in its faith and does not stand firm in it; then do not even expect to obtain of the Lord what you have prayed for doubtingly, for in so doing you have offended the Lord, and God does not bestow His gifts upon a reviler. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive,"[1] said the Lord. This means, that if you doubt and do not believe, you shall not receive. "If ye have faith and doubt not," said He also, "ye shall have power to move mountains."[2] Therefore, if you doubt and do not believe, you shall not have power to do so. "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed," says the Apostle James; "for let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."[3] The heart that doubts that God can grant what it asks for is punished for this doubt: it is painfully oppressed and contracted by doubt. Do not anger Almighty God even by a shade of doubt—especially you, who have already experienced many and many times, the omnipotence of God. Doubt is a blasphemy against God, an insolent lie of the heart or of the lying spirit that nestles in the heart, against the spirit of truth. Fear it as you would fear a venomous serpent, or no—what I would rather say, is, despise it, do not take the slightest heed of it. Remember that God, during your prayer, is waiting for your affirmative answer to the question which He is inwardly asking you: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" To which question

[1] St. Matthew xxi. 22. [2] St. Matthew xxi. 3. [3] James i. 6-8.

you must from the depth of your heart reply, "Yea, Lord."[1] Let the following considerations also help you in your doubt or unbelief: I ask of God, firstly, that which already exists, and nothing merely imaginary not a fanciful good, and everything that exists receives its being from God: because "without Him was not anything made that was made,"[2] and therefore, nothing that happens can happen without Him, and everything has either received its being from Him, or happens by His will or His permission, by means of powers and faculties given by Him to His creatures—and in everything that exists or is still happening, God is an all-powerful Master. Besides this, "He calleth those things which be not as though they were."[3] Therefore, had I even asked for that which does not exist, He could give it to me by creating it. Secondly, I ask of God what is possible, because what is impossible for us is possible for God; and there cannot be any difficulty even in this respect, because God can do for me even that which is impossible in my own opinion. It is our misfortune that our faith is hindered by the short-sightedness of our reason—that spider, that catches the truth in the web of its judgments, its arguments and analogies. Faith embraces and sees suddenly, whilst reason arrives at the truth by circuitous ways; faith is the means of communication between one spirit and another, whilst reason is the means of communication between the spiritually sensual and the spiritually sensual and even simply material: the first is the spirit and the latter the flesh.

All the blessings of the soul, that is, all that constitutes the true life, the peace and the joy of the soul, come from God! This I have proved by experience. My heart tells me so. Thou, O Holy Ghost, art a treasury of blessings!

Having Christ in your heart, fear that you may lose Him, and with Him the peace of your heart; it is hard to begin again; efforts to attach oneself afresh to Him after falling away will be very grievous, and will cost bitter tears to many. Cling to Christ with all your might, gain Him, and do not lose boldness in approaching Him. "Come unto me"

You gaze upon the icon of the Saviour and see that He looks at you from it with brightest eyes; this look is the image of how He actually looks upon you with His eyes, that are brighter than the sun, and sees all your thoughts, hears all your heartfelt distress and sighs. The image is an image, and represents in lines and signs that which cannot be delineated,

[1] St. Matthew ix. 28. [2] St. John i. 3. [3] Romans iv. 17.

cannot be given in signs, and can be comprehended by faith alone. Believe, then, that the Saviour always protects you and sees each one of you—with all your thoughts, sorrows and sighing, in all your circumstances, as upon the palm of the hand. "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me,"[1] says the Lord God. How much consolation and life are contained in these gracious words of the Almighty and Provident God! Therefore pray before the icon of the Saviour as before Himself. The Lover of men is present in it by His grace, and with the eyes depicted in it really looks at you: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place,"[2] while with His ears as represented on the icon, He hears you. But remember that His eyes are the eyes of God, and His ears are the ears of the omnipresent God.

In the well-intentioned works of men, esteem the light of Christ—"the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"[3]—and read them with love, thanking the Light-giving Christ, Who so richly bestows His light upon those who are zealous for the glory of His name. 8/9/77

Wherever I am, as soon as I raise the eyes of my heart in my affliction to God, the Lover of men immediately answers my faith and prayer, and the sorrow immediately departs. He is at every time and every hour near me, only I do not see it, but I feel it vividly in my heart. Sorrow is the death of the heart, and it is a falling away from God. The expansion, the peace of heart through lively faith in Him, prove more clearly than the day, that God is constantly present near me, and that He dwells within me. What intercessor or angel can set us free from our sins or sorrows? None, but God alone. This is from experience.

Let us measure the worth of our prayers by human measure or by the quality of our relation to other men. How do we behave to other people? Sometimes we express our requests, praises and gratitude to them coldly, heartlessly, out of duty or simply out of politeness, and it is the same when we do anything for them; whilst at other times we do so with warmth, heartily, and lovingly, often only feigning, often really sincerely. We are similarly unequal with God. But this should not be. We must always, from our whole hearts, sing and express to God our praises, our gratitude and our requests; every work must be done before Him with the whole heart. He must be loved and trusted with the whole heart.

[1] Isaiah xlix. 16. [2] Proverbs xv. 3. [3] St. John i. 9.

Faith in God's existence is closely connected with faith in the existence of our own souls, as a part of the spiritual world. God's existence is as evident to the pious mind as its own being, because every thought, good or bad, every desire, every intention, word or act of such a mind is followed by a corresponding change in the state of the heart, peace or trouble, joy or grief, and this is the result of the action upon it of the God of spirits and bodies, Who is reflected in the pious mind as the sun is reflected in a drop of water ; the purer the drop is, the better, the clearer will be the reflection ; the more turbid the drop, the dimmer will be the reflection ; so that in the soul's state of extreme impurity or darkness, the reflection entirely ceases and the soul is left in a state of spiritual darkness, in a state of insensibility. In this state the man having eyes, sees not, and having ears, hears not. Again, in relation to our souls, God may be likened to the outer air in relation to the mercury of the thermometer—with this difference, that the expansion and rest, rise and fall of the mercury proceed from the change in the state of the atmosphere ; whilst, in the first case, God remains unchangeable, everlasting and eternally good and just. Whilst the soul, changeable in its relation to God, suffers changes in itself, thus it unavoidably expands and obtains peace of heart when it draws nearer to God by faith and good works, and unavoidably contracts, becomes restless and wearied, when it withdraws itself from God by unlawful acts, want of faith, and unbelief in God's Truth.

The evil spirit tries to scatter prayer as if it were a sand-heap, tries to turn the words into dry sand, without coherency or moisture—that is to say, without fervour of heart. Thus prayer may become either a house built on sand or a house built on a rock. Those build on sand who pray without faith, absently, coldly : such prayer is scattered of itself, and does not bring any profit to him who prays ; those build on a rock who, during the whole time of their prayer, have their eyes fixed upon God, and pray to Him as to a living person, conversing face to face with them.

Edifying words, the writings of the Holy Fathers, prayers, and especially the words of the Word Himself, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, are indeed living water ; water runs, and the words flow like water ; water refreshes and gives life to the body, and edifying words animate the soul, filling it with peace and joy, or with compunction and contrition for sin.

Our hope of obtaining that which we ask for during prayer is founded upon faith in God's mercy and bountifulness, for He is the God of mercy and bountifulness, and the Lover of men; therefore at that time it is useful to remind ourselves of former innumerable experiences of mercy and grace bestowed upon men (in Holy Writ and in the lives of the Saints) and upon ourselves. Besides this, in order that prayer may be effectual it is also necessary that those who pray should have already obtained that which they formerly asked for, and firmly believe this with their whole heart. We often receive through prayer that which we have asked for, especially when we pray for that which relates to the salvation of our soul; it is necessary to ascribe this directly to God and His grace, and not to chance. How can there possibly be any chance in the Kingdom of the Almighty God? Nothing can really happen without His will, as "without Him was not anything made that hath been made."[1] Many do not pray because it seems to them that they did not receive any gift from God when they prayed before, or because they consider praying unnecessary; they say that God knows everything without our asking, and forget that it is said: "Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."[2] Our requests (prayers) are necessary expressly to strengthen our faith, through which alone can we be saved. "By grace are we saved through faith."[3] "O woman, great is thy faith."[4] For this reason the Lord made the woman pray earnestly, in order to awaken her faith and to strengthen it. Such men do not see that they have no faith—the Christian's most precious inheritance, which is as necessary as life itself—that they "make Him a liar"[5] by their unbelief, and that they are the children of the Devil, unworthy of any of God's mercies; that they are going to destruction. It is also necessary that our hearts should burn during prayer with a desire for spiritual blessings, with love to God, and that we should vividly represent to ourselves His extreme mercy to mankind, and His readiness to hear all our prayers with fatherly love. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?"[6]

God, being the eternal Truth, does not suffer in us even a moment of doubt in the truth. God, as the eternal Mercy, "will have all men to be saved, and to come into the knowledge of the truth."[7] And we, the children of the merciful God,

[1] St. John i. 3. [2] St. Matthew vii. 7. [3] Ephesians ii. 8.
[4] St Matthew xv. 28. [5] 1 John i. 10. [6] St. Matthew vii. 11.
[7] 1 Timothy ii. 4.

also must wish with our whole hearts that all men, and even our enemies, should be saved, and must care for this.

Watch your heart during all your life—examine it, listen to it, and see what prevents its union with the most blessed Lord. Let this be for you the science of all sciences, and with God's help you will easily observe what estranges you from God, and what draws you towards Him and unites you to Him. It is the evil spirit more than anything that stands between our hearts and God; he estranges God from us by various passions, or by the desires of the flesh, by the desires of the eyes, and by worldly pride.

Why should it be wonderful if God Himself, the Creator of all things visible and invisible, transforms, transubstantiates bread and wine into His own most pure Body and His own most pure Blood? In these—in the bread and wine—the Son of God does not become again incarnate, for He was already once incarnate, and this is sufficient unto endless ages; but he is incarnate in the very same flesh in which he was before incarnate, in the same manner as He multiplied the five loaves and fed with these five loaves several thousands of people. There are a great many mysteries in nature which my mind cannot grasp, although they have concrete forms, yet they exist, with their mysteries. So also, in this Sacrament of the life-giving Body and Blood, it is a mystery for me, how the bread and wine are made into the Body and Blood of the Lord Himself—but the mystery of the Body and Blood really exists, although it is incomprehensible to me. My Creator (I am only His clay, for God formed me of flesh and blood and endued me with a spirit), as the Most Wise, the infinitely Almighty God, has innumerable mysteries: I myself am a mystery, as the work of His hands. For my soul there is the Spirit of the Lord, and for my soul and body there are His Body and Blood.

In the same way as the soul carries its body, so God carries the whole universe, all the worlds, being Himself more vast than they are; the soul fills the whole body, and the "Spirit of the Lord filleth the world;"[1] only the soul is limited by the body, though not completely, as it may be borne everywhere; and the Spirit of the Lord is not limited by the universe, and is not contained in the world, as the soul is in the Body.

Christ being led into the heart by faith, dwells in it with peace and joy. It is not without reason that it is said of God, "He is Holy, and rests in the saints."[2]

[1] Wisdom i. 7. [2] Exclamation taken from the Vespers.

Do not forget yourself in looking upon the beauty of the human face, but look upon the soul; do not look upon the man's garment (the body being his temporary garment), but look upon him who is clothed in it. Do not admire the magnificence of the mansion, but look upon the dweller who lives in it and what he is—otherwise, you will offend the image of God in the man, will dishonour the King by worshipping His servant and not rendering unto Him even the least of the honour due to Him. Also—do not look upon the beauty of the printing of a book, but look upon the spirit of the book; otherwise you will depreciate the spirit and exalt the flesh; for the letters are the flesh, and the contents of the book the spirit. Do not be allured by the melodious sounds of an instrument or of a voice, but by their effect upon the soul, or by the words of the song, consider what their spirit is: if the sounds produce upon your soul tranquil, chaste, holy feelings, then listen to them and feed your soul with them; whilst, if they give rise in your soul to passions, then leave off listening to them, and throw aside both the flesh and the spirit of the music. 11/9/97

The inner man, amidst worldly vanity, amidst the darkness of his flesh, is not so bound by the temptations of the evil one, and looks out more freely early in the morning, just after waking up, like a fish, which sometimes throws itself up playfully on the surface of the water. All the remaining time he is enveloped in almost impenetrable darkness, his eyes are covered by a bandage, which conceals from him the true state of things spiritual and physical. Take advantage of these morning hours, which are the hours of a new life, or of a life renewed by temporary sleep. They show us in part that state in which we shall be when we shall rise up renewed on that great and universal morning of the nightless day of resurrection, or when we shall rid ourselves of this mortal body.

Even during prayer, man is for the greater part not the son of freedom, but the slave of necessity and duty. Look at any man you like, even at a priest. Do many of them pray with a free expanded heart, with living faith and love?

During prayer there sometimes occur moments of deadly darkness and spiritual anguish arising from unbelief of the heart (for unbelief is darkness). Do not let your heart fail you at such moments, but remember that if the divine light has been sent off in you, it always shines in all its splendour and greatness in God Himself, in God's Church, in heaven and

on earth, and in the material world in which "His eternal power and Godhead are visible."[1] Do not think that truth has failed, because truth is God Himself, and everything that exists has its foundation and reason in Him. Only your own weak, sinful and darkened heart can fail in the truth, for it cannot always bear the strength of the light of truth, and is not always capable of containing its purity, but only it is being or has been purified from its sins, as the first cause of spiritual darkness. The proof of this you may find in yourself. When the light of faith or God's truth dwells in your heart, only then is it tranquil, firm, strong, and living; but when this is cut off, then your heart becomes uneasy, weak as a reed shaken by the wind, and lifeless. Do not pay any attention to this darkness of Satan. Drive it away from your heart by making the sign of the life-giving Cross!

Do not spare yourself, but pray earnestly, even if you have been toiling all day. Do not be negligent in holy prayer; say it to God unto the end from your whole heart, for it is a duty you owe to God. Having put your hand to the plough, do not look back.[2] If you allow yourself to pray carelessly, and not from your heart, you will not fall asleep (if you pray at night) until you have wiped out by tears your sin before God. This is not so with everybody, however, but only with the more perfect. Take care, then, not to put your flesh before God, and disdain, for His sake, bodily repose. If you have made a rule to read so many prayers (whether they be long or short, fulfil the reading of all of them well), read the prayers with all conscientiousness, and do not do God's work with your heart divided in two, so that only one half belongs to Him and the remaining half to your own flesh. God is a jealous God, and will not suffer your duplicity, your self-pity. He will deliver you up to the Devil, and the Devil will not let your heart rest for your neglect of God, Who is the true peace of your heart, and Who will always do that which is for your own good, so as to keep your heart near Him; for every insincere prayer removes your heart from God and sets it in opposition to you yourself, whilst every earnest prayer draws your heart nearer to God and makes it perpetually godly. Thus, be assured, if you hurry over your prayers, to give rest to your body, you will lose both spiritual and bodily rest. Oh! by what labour, sweat, and tears is the approach of our heart to God gained! Is it possible that we should again make our very prayers (when careless) the means of our estrangement from God, and that God should not be jealous of this? For He pities us and our former labours, and He desires that we should again unfailingly turn to

[1] Romans i. 20. [2] St. Luke ix. 62.

Him with our whole hearts. He wishes that we should always belong to Him.

Without God (without His omnipresence) there cannot be any single motion of my thought or heart: if there is an action, there must be a reason; if there is a consequence, there must be an origin. This is why the Apostle says: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves" (capable) "to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."[1] God Himself lives, and that is why my soul also lives.

If my life were prolonged only for a few moments—let us say ten—and five of these ten were moments of peace and quietness, and the remaining five moments of pain and torments, even then I ought undoubtedly to say, "Surely the Giver of Life is with me, and He will provide for me"; likewise, I undoubtedly ought to say, "There is a being in the world who has the power of death, because the five unfavourable moments must proceed from the being that works against God, for the same cause cannot produce opposite actions. And in me, sinner as I am, at least seventy parts of my spiritual life belong to God, and only thirty parts to the Devil. How is it possible for me, then, not to see my Benefactor constantly before me, and how can I possibly waver mentally in my lively faith in Him?"

Time passes without stopping, and my body, even during my lifetime, constantly changes and passes on, and the whole world as is seen in its motion, also passes on, as though it were hurrying to its appointed end, like a machine set in motion. Where, then, is constancy? Constancy is that which moves and directs all this to its purpose. The first Cause of all that is complex and created is constant, being Itself not complex, and therefore not passing, but eternal. The souls of angels and men, created after the image of the first Cause, are also constant. Everything else is like a soap bubble. I do not lower creation by these words, but only thus speak of it in comparison with the Creator and beatified souls.

Value by its properties that greatest miracle of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, as manifested in the communion, with faith, of His divine mysteries. What is the miracle? The peace-giving and life-giving effect upon your heart, slain by sin, which is so apparent after the uneasiness of heart and the spiritual deadness that often precedes communion. Never consider it from habit as anything ordinary or

[1] 2 Corinthians iii. 5.

unimportant: by such thoughts and such a disposition of heart you will incur the wrath of God, and you will not enjoy peace nor feel renewed life after communion. By the most lively and heartfelt gratitude for the holy life-giving Sacrament you will obtain life from the Lord and your faith will increase more and more. Fear and uneasiness proceed from unbelief. Consider their arising during communion as a true sign, that by unbelief you are removing yourself from the Life contained in the Cup and do not pay attention to them. O faith! faith! thou thyself art a miracle to us! It is thou that savest us! "Thy faith hath made thee whole."[1] And after lively faith in God's truth we always go from God in peace; whilst, on the contrary, after unbelief, always without peace. Ah! Satan often enters into us after we have unworthily communicated of the Divine Mysteries, and in every way tries to instil his lie into our hearts—that is, unbelief, for unbelief is the same thing as a lie. The destroyer of men now, as of old, tries in every way to destroy men by his lying, and by various thoughts and desires, and having stolen into the heart in the form of unbelief or any passion, he manifests himself in a manner worthy of him, mostly by impatience and malice, and you see that he is in you; but you will not often at once rid yourself of him, because he usually takes care to close every outlet in your heart by unbelief, obduracy, and others of his brood. "Thy labour is in vain, thou fallen angel, I am the servant of my Lord Jesus Christ. Thou that exaltest thyself in thine arrogance, lowerest thyself by thus violently struggling with me, weak as I am." Say thus mentally to the evil spirit, as he lays his heavy load on your heart and compels you to evil of various kinds. These words will be like fiery scourges to the proud spirit, and he, shamed by your firmness and spiritual wisdom, will flee from you. You at once will perceive, feel, and wonder at the marvellous change in you; the heavy, soul-destroying load in your heart will no longer be there; you will feel so relieved, and will be convinced by your feelings that there are spirits of evil hovering around us and constantly seeking our destruction, poisoning our hearts with the poison of dark and evil thoughts, and endeavouring to destroy our love to mankind and fellowship with them.

As all my misfortunes arise in my invisible mind and my invisible heart, therefore I require the invisible Saviour, Who directs our hearts. O my strength, Jesus, Son of God! O Light of my mind! the peace, the joy of my heart—glory to Thee! Glory to Thee, Deliverer from my invisible enemies,

[1] St. Mark v. 34.

that fight against my mind and my heart, slaying me in the very source of my life, in my most sensitive part!

Keep a strict watch against every appearance of pride: it appears imperceptibly, particularly in time of vexation and irritability against others for quite unimportant causes.

The miraculous effect of the life-giving Cross upon our souls, tortured by the poison of evil, proves to us most undoubtedly and clearly: (1) That we have indeed a soul, a spiritual being; (2) That there are evil spirits, harming our souls; (3) That God exists and our Lord Jesus Christ, and that He is always with us through His Divinity; and (4) That He has indeed accomplished our salvation by His sufferings and death on the Cross, and has destroyed the power of the Devil by means of the Cross. How many proofs of the advantage of our faith there are in the wonderful action upon us of the life-giving Cross alone! Glory be to the Christian faith!

Men who are leading a spiritual life see by the eyes of their heart how the Devil lays his snares, how the angels guide us, and how the Lord, in His Sovereign power, allows the temptations, and how He comforts.

The only means by which you can spend the day in perfect holiness, peace, and without sin, is the most sincere, fervent prayer as soon as you rise from sleep in the morning. It will bring Christ into your heart, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and will thus strengthen and fortify your soul against any evil; but still it will be necessary for you carefully to guard your heart.

Sometimes in the affliction of your soul you wish to die. It is easy to die, and does not take long; but are you prepared for death? Remember that after death the judgment of your whole life will follow.[1] You are not prepared for death, and if it were to come to you, you would shudder all over. Therefore do not waste words in vain. Do not say: "It is better for me to die," but say rather, "How can I prepare for death in a Christian manner?" By means of faith, by means of good works, and by bravely bearing the miseries and sorrows that happen to you, so as to be able to meet death fearlessly, peacefully, and without shame, not as a rigorous law of nature, but as a fatherly call of the eternal, heavenly, holy, and blessed Father unto the everlasting Kingdom. Remember the old man who, being weary of his heavy

[1] Hebrews ix. 27.

burden, called for death. When it came he did not wish to die, and preferred to go on carrying his heavy burden.

With the mental eyes of my heart, I see how I mentally breathe Christ in my heart, how He enters into it, and suddenly tranquillises and rejoices it. O, do not leave me to dwell alone, without Thyself, the life-giver, my breath, my joy! It is hard for me to be left without Thee.

Is it possible to pray rapidly without injuring the effect of the prayer? It is possible to those who have learned to pray inwardly with a pure heart. During prayer it is necessary that your heart should sincerely desire that which you ask for, should feel the truth of what you are saying, and this comes naturally to a pure heart. That is why it is capable of praying even rapidly, and at the same time agreeably, to God, as the rapidity in this case does not injure the truth (sincerity) of the prayer. But for those who have not attained the capability of praying sincerely it is necessary to pray slowly, waiting for a corresponding echo in the heart to each word of the prayer. And this is not always soon given to men unaccustomed to prayerful contemplation. Therefore, for such men, it must be laid down as an absolute rule to pronounce the words of the prayer slowly, and with pauses. Wait until every word gives back its corresponding echo in your heart.

Sometimes in his heart a man draws near to God, sometimes he goes far from God, and therefore he experiences either peace and joy, or fear, disturbance, and oppression. The one is life, the other spiritual death. We draw near to God mostly in time of affliction, from which no one can save us, but God, to Whom we then turn with our whole heart, and thus approach Him sincerely; whilst we go far from God in times of ease and abundance of earthly blessings, which make the old carnal man proud of himself, and—especially when he thirsts for riches, glory and distinction, and has attained all these—he loses faith from his heart and forgets God, his Judge and Recompenser, forgets the immortality of his soul, and his duty to love God with all his heart and his neighbour as himself.

As an ill-natured man, coming with a request to one who is kind, gentle and meek, for the greater success of his request tries to resemble him, so the Christian, approaching God with a prayer to Him, or to His most pure Mother, or to the angels and saints, in order to insure the success of his prayer, ought to try

to resemble as far as possible the Lord Himself, or His most-pure Mother, or the angels and saints. In this lies the secret of drawing near to God, and of His speedily hearing our prayers.

The Holy Trinity sees and hears me; this is the most life-giving assurance for my heart, penetrating it with peace and joy. The benign Mother of God, the Word also sees me, and hears my prayers, and my sighing towards Her, and this is another comforting assurance, constantly realised. Thus will I walk, with the feeling of God's omnipresence and omniscience.

The most striking proof that there is a devil in the world is that men do not feel, or feel very little (though some endeavour to do so), the mercies that God has bestowed upon them in the creation, guidance and redemption: the Devil is a powerful antagonist to everything good and righteous.

The problem of our life is union with God, and sin completely prevents this; therefore flee from sin as from a terrible enemy, as from the destroyer of the soul, because to be without God is death and not life. Let us therefore understand our destination; let us always remember that our common Master calls us to union with Himself.

It is especially necessary for Christians to have a pure heart, so that they may be able to see God with the eyes of the heart, as He is, with His love to us and with all His perfections, as well as to be able to contemplate the beauty of the angels, all the glory of the Holy Virgin, the beauty of Her soul and Her greatness, as the Mother of God, and the beauty of the souls of God's saints, and their love to us; we must see them as they are in themselves, we must contemplate the truths of the Christian faith, with all its sacraments, and feel their greatness; we must see the state of our own souls, and especially our sins. An impure heart—that is, a heart occupied with earthly passions—feeds itself on the carnal desires of the eyes and worldly pride; it cannot see any of the things we have indicated.

Prayer is the lifting up of the mind and heart to God.[1] From this it is evident that it is quite impossible for anyone to pray whose mind and heart are attached to anything carnal—for instance, to money or to honours—or who has in his heart passions such as hatred or envy for others, because passions usually contract the heart, in the same way as God expands it and gives it true freedom.

[1] From Philaret's Catechism.

It is incomprehensible how Jesus Christ is united with the sign of the Cross, and gives it the wonderful power of driving away passions, demons, and to calm the troubled soul. It is likewise incomprehensible how the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ is united with the bread and wine, transforming them into His own Flesh and Blood, and manifestly cleansing our soul from sins, bringing into it heavenly peace and tranquillity and making it good, gentle, humble, and full of hearty faith and hope. This is partly explained by the fact that the Almighty, creating spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ is everywhere, and that everywhere He "calleth those things which be not as though they were";[1] and therefore much more can He make what exists other from what it was. And in order that the unbelieving heart should not think that both the sign of the Cross and the name of Christ act miraculously by themselves, apart from and independently of Christ Himself, this same Cross and name of Christ do not perform any miracles, until I see Jesus Christ with the eyes of my heart, or by faith, and until I believe with my whole heart all that which He has accomplished for our salvation.

"I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[2] So it is, Master: Thou art with us throughout all days; we are not a single day without Thee, and we cannot live without Thy presence near us! Thou art with us especially in the Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood. O, how truly and essentially art Thou present in the Holy Mysteries! Thou our Lord in every liturgy takest upon Thyself a vile body similar to ours in every respect save that of sin, and feedest us with Thy life-giving flesh. Through the Sacrament Thou art wholly with us, and Thy Flesh is united to our flesh, whilst Thy Spirit is united to our soul; and we feel this life-giving, most peaceful, most sweet union, we feel that by joining ourselves to Thee in the Holy Eucharist we become one spirit with Thee as it is said: "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."[3] We become like Thee, good, meek and lowly, as Thou hast said of Thyself: "I am meek and lowly in heart."[4] True it is that often our evil and blind flesh, or the prince of this world, who dwells in our simple flesh, whispers to us that the Sacrament contains only bread and wine, and not the very Body and Blood of our Lord Himself, and sends sight, taste and feeling as his crafty witnesses to this. But we do not allow ourselves to listen to these calumnies and reason thus. To Thee, Lord, everything is possible: Thou createst the flesh of men, animals, fishes, birds, reptiles, of all creatures, Is it possible that for Thyself, Thou, "Who art everywhere, and fillest everything," wilt not create flesh? Not only this, Thou

[1] Romans iv. 17. [2] St. Matthew xxviii. 20. [3] 1 Corinthians vi. 17.
[4] St. Matthew xi. 29.

Ans: when the unbiblical expression "Mother of God" is used, there is no reference to Scripture

changest a dead substance into a living one—as, for instance, Moses' rod into the serpent—and there is nothing impossible for Thee. Canst Thou not, therefore, create flesh for Thyself out of bread and wine, which are so near to our flesh, being used for our food and drink, and thus being converted into our own flesh and blood? Thou dost not test our faith more than it can bear, for Thou dost not transubstantiate a lump of earth into Thy most-pure Body, but white bread, soft, clean, pleasant to the taste; and Thou dost not create Thy Blood from water, but from wine, called in Holy Scripture the blood of the grape,[1] corresponding in colour to that of blood, agreeable to the taste, and rejoicing the heart of man. Thou knowest our infirmity, the weakness of our faith, and therefore Thou condescendest to employ in the Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood the substances most suitable to them. Let us, therefore, firmly believe that under the form of bread and wine we communicate of the true Body and of the true Blood of our Lord; that in the mystery of the Holy Communion, Jesus Christ Himself will dwell with us "alway, even unto the end of the world."[2]

Our soul is, so to say, a reflection of God's countenance; and the brighter this reflection is, the clearer and calmer is the soul; and the less bright this reflection is, the darker, the more disturbed is the soul. And as our soul is our heart it is necessary that every truth of God should be reflected in it through feeling, through gratitude, and that there should be no reflection in it of any lie. Feel God's love in the most pure mysteries, feel the truth of all prayers. Our heart is a mirror; as the objects of the outer world are reflected in an ordinary mirror, so ought the truth to be reflected with all exactitude in our hearts.

It is good, very good indeed, to be virtuous; the virtuous man is at peace himself, is pleasing to God and agreeable to other people. The virtuous man involuntarily attracts everyone's attention. Why is it so? Because fragrance involuntarily attracts attention and makes everyone wish to breathe it. Look upon the very appearance of the virtuous man, upon his countenance. What sort of a countenance is it? It is the face of an angel. Meekness and humility overspread it, and involuntarily captivate everyone by their beauty. Pay attention to his speech; from it there comes still greater fragrance: here you are as if face to face with his soul, and are enraptured with his sweet converse.

Love calms and agreeably expands the heart and vivifies

[1] Sirach xxxix. 26. [2] St. Matthew xxviii. 20.

it, whilst hatred painfully contracts and disturbs it. Those who hate others torture and tyrannise over themselves; therefore they are the most foolish of the foolish ones.

When you see your body wasted through sickness, do not murmur against God, but say: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."[1] You are accustomed to look upon your body as upon your own inalienable property, but that is quite wrong, because your body is God's edifice.

What a great personage a priest is! He is in constant converse with God, and God constantly replies to his speech, as whatever the ceremonies of the Church may be, whatever his prayers, he is speaking to God, and whatever the ceremonies of the Church may be and whatever his prayers, the Lord answers him. How, under these circumstances, when assaulted by passions, can the priest forget that such passions are base, impure, especially for him, and that it is impossible to let them enter into his heart, which Jesus Christ alone ought to fill entirely? A priest is an angel and not a man; everything worldly ought to be left far away behind him. O Lord, "let thy priests be clothed with righteousness"[2]; let them always remember the greatness of their calling and do not let them be entangled in the nets of the world and the Devil; let them be saved from "the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering into their hearts."[3]

There are innumerable and various ways by means of which the Devil enters into our soul and removes it from God, pressing upon it with all his being, dark, hateful, and destroying. Whatever the motion of passion may be, he finds a way, and does not neglect the least opportunity of entering the soul. Likewise there are innumerable and various ways for the Holy Ghost to enter it: the way of sincere faith, of true humility, of love to God and to our neighbour, and so on. But, to our misfortune, the destroyer of men from time immemorial makes every effort to obstruct, by all possible means, all these ways for the Holy Ghost to enter the soul. The most usual way to God for us sinners, who have strayed from Him into a far-away land, is the way of painful suffering and bitter tears. Both the Holy Scriptures and actual experience testify that, in order to draw near to God, it is necessary for the sinner to suffer, weep, shed tears, and to amend his deceitful heart: "Draw nigh to God . . . . be

[1] Job i. 21. [2] Psalm cxxxii. 9. [3] St. Mark iv. 19.

afflicted, and mourn, and weep."[1] Tears have power to cleanse the wickedness of our heart, and sufferings and affliction are necessary, because through suffering the sinful expansion of the heart is salutarily contracted, and when the heart is thus contracted, tears more easily flow.

When the Devil is in our heart, then we feel an unusual, overwhelming load and fire in the breast and in the heart. The soul contracts extremely and darkens, everything irritates it, it feels an aversion to every good work; the words and acts of other persons in reference to ourselves we interpret falsely and see in them ill-will and designs against our honour, and therefore we feel a deep, deadly hatred towards them; we are infuriated and long for vengeance. "By their fruits ye shall know them."[2] There are days when the spirit of evil disturbs me.

Men have fallen into unbelief because they have either completely lost the spirit of prayer, or never had it at all, nor have it now—in short, because they do not pray. The prince of this world has full scope for action in the hearts of such men; he becomes their master. They have not asked and do not ask God's grace in prayer (for God's gifts are only given to those who ask and seek), and thus their hearts, corrupt by nature, become dried up without the vivifying dew of the Holy Ghost, and at last from their extreme dryness they take fire, and blaze with the infernal flame of unbelief and various passions, and the Devil only knows how to inflame the passions that keep up this terrible fire, and triumphs at the sight of the ruin of the unfortunate souls that were redeemed by the blood of Him who has trampled the power of Satan under foot.

A morning prayer. O, God! Creator and Master of the World! Mercifully protect Thy creature, adorned with Thy Godly image, in these morning hours: Let Thine eyes, millions and millions of times brighter than the rays of the sun, vivify and enlighten my soul, darkened and slain by sin. Deliver me from despondency and slothfulness, grant me joy and vigour of soul, so that with a glad heart I may praise Thy mercy, Thy holiness, Thy boundless greatness, and Thy infinite perfections, at every hour and in every place. For Thou, Lord, art my Creator and the Master of my life, and to Thee Thy reasonable creatures every hour ascribe glory and praise, both now and for ever and to ages of ages. Amen.

[1] James iv. 8 and 9. [2] St. Matthew vii. 20.

From the time when man, by his own will, fell away from God, he, like an animal that was once domestic, but afterwards grew wild in a thick forest, reluctantly looks back upon the place of his former abode, preferring the darkness of the forest—that is, of this world—to the light of the former place—that is, of God's paradise. It is difficult for him to unite himself to God, and when so united, he often falls away again from Him. It is difficult for him to sincerely believe in God, and in all that He has opened to him, and he does not constantly strive to preserve in his heart the Heavenly gift of faith.

If God does not leave a blade of grass, a flower, or a small leaf of a tree without His good providence, will He leave us? O, let every man be convinced with his whole heart that God is true to Himself in His providence for even the least of His creatures. Let him understand that the Creator invisibly dwells in all His creatures. In the words of our Saviour, God clothes the grass of the field, feeds the fowls of the air.[1] In how many ways does not God rejoice us, His creatures, even by flowers? Like a tender mother, in His eternal power and wisdom, He every summer creates for us, out of nothing, these most beautiful plants. Let us enjoy them, not forgetting to glorify the goodness of the Creator, our heavenly Father; let us on our part, too, reply to His love by loving hearts.

He that does not believe in the God Who saves us in difficult circumstances, but is faint-hearted; he that does not wish to render glory to God, that represents Him as not vigilant, but sleeping, not all-powerful and not merciful, thinks falsely of the God of truth, and thus sins grievously. Especially inexcusable are faint-heartedness and unbelief in the man who has already been deemed worthy of often receiving marvellous help from God the Saviour. O, how great a sinner I am!

The invisible, all-pervading God often and sensibly touches my invisible soul, which, from this touch, enjoys wonderful rest and heavenly joy. It is not the eyes which give me tidings of my God (ordinary feelings are destined for the lower objects of creation), not the hearing by means of words or sounds of the voice that carries to me the message of the Incomprehensible, but the soul itself becomes, so to say, dissolved in God.

When you are disturbed and depressed by the wickedness

[1] St. Matthew vi. 26-30.

of men, remember how boundlessly you are beloved by the Almighty and All-righteous God, Who suffers the evil until the time comes, and then will justly punish it. You cannot master yourself, your tongue, or one single member of your body. Judge by this what He must be, Who governs the whole world, Who keeps it in such wonderful order, Who governs the whole of mankind, evil, perverted as we are, ever ready as we are to destroy each other, and yet meanwhile more prosperous than needy under His sovereignty. How almighty and wise must He be to govern such heterogeneous multitudes! Trust in Him entirely.

When the matter relates to God's Mysteries, do not inwardly ask: how can this be? You do not know how God created the whole world from nothing; you cannot and may not know here either how God mysteriously works. God's mystery must remain a mystery for you, because you are not God, and cannot know all that is known to the eternally Wise, Almighty God. You are the work of His hands: His most insignificant creature. Remember that there was a time when there was nothing and that afterwards all that now exists was created out of nothing by the Word of God. "Without Him was not anything made that was made."[1]

You who pray, give God your heart, that loving true heart, with which you love your children, your father and mother, your benefactors and friends, and in which you feel the sweetness of pure unfeigned love.

Sometimes during a long-continued prayer only a few minutes are really pleasing to God and constitute true prayer and true service to God. The chief thing in prayer is the nearness of the heart to God, as proved by the sweetness of God's presence in the soul.

"Let it be as I will, and not as thou wilt." Such is the mighty voice of God, which our soul ever hears when it has fallen into sin and desires to emerge from a state of spiritual, sinful affliction. "Let it be as I will: either repent from the depths of your heart in proportion to the sin, and return to the road that leads to life, shown by Me; either bear the punishment, corresponding to the sin and determined by My justice, or your sin will torment you as a deviation from My laws." And only then will our soul enjoy peace when we truly repent from the depths of our heart in propor-

[1] St. John i. 3.

tion to the sin, or bear the punishment due from God. O! Almighty and most just power of our God, invisibly governing our invisible souls, all glory to Thee, glory to Thee, God our Saviour! Thy will be done in us!

How easily and speedily the Lord can save us!—instantaneously, unexpectedly, imperceptibly. Often during the day I have been a great sinner, and at night, after prayer, I have gone to rest, justified and whiter than snow by the grace of the Holy Ghost, with the deepest peace and joy in my heart! How easy it will be for the Lord to save us too in the evening of our life, at the decline of our days! O! save, save, save me, most gracious Lord; receive me in Thy heavenly Kingdom! Everything is possible to Thee. "To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yes, he shall be holden up: for the Lord is able to make him stand."[1]

That which is especially important and constitutes the life of the being the Creator has placed and concealed far away in the very depths within that being; we see this everywhere. Thus in the man the soul is in the very midst of his being—in the heart; and therefore the soul is often called the heart and the heart the soul. "Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me, my heart within me is desolate."[2] "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."[3]

Our God is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy."[4] He is not a God of torments and punishments. Our torments are the fruit of our sins and the work of the incorporeal fallen spirits. Therefore if you suffer grievously, only blame your sins and the Devil, but chiefly yourself, because the Devil would not do you any harm if he did not find anything in you that he could fasten on to.

"I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."[5] "My glory will I not give to another."[6] These words of the God of glory are fulfilled every time when in my heart I ascribe the glory of my God's works, accomplished in me by the Holy Gifts, to anything or anybody else and do not ascribe them with my whole heart to Him. He instantly becomes jealous of the glory of His righteous, ever-miraculous, vivifying Mysteries, and in His justice punishes my soul with His Fatherly rod! O then my soul clearly hears the voice of its God: "My glory will I not give to another. As you

[1] Rom. xiv. 4. [2] Psalm cxliii. 4. [3] Psalm li. 10.
[4] Psalm ciii. 8. [5] Exodus xx. 5. [6] Isaiah xlii. 8.

do not ascribe to Me the glory due to Me, so evident to you in my Mysteries, I strike you inwardly with the rod of My truth so that you may thus know and heartily believe that I never will give My glory to another. I cleanse your sins and make your soul whiter than snow by My blood; I visit your soul with peace and joy; I warm and cherish you as a mother cherishes her child, and I instil within you My meekness and humility; I pour love into your heart; I completely transform and change you—to your own wonder into a new man—and to whom else shall I give the glory of My works? I am eternally unchangeable. 'God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent.'" [1]

The invisible God acts upon my soul as if He were visible, as if He were present here before me, knowing all my thoughts and feelings; every inward slothfulness, stubbornness, or other passion is always accompanied by a corresponding punishment. In general, if my inward disposition is unworthy of God, of His holiness, then I suffer punishment for it in my heart, a devouring fire; and if it is a worthy one, then I am joyful and at peace.

No, whatever you may say, a man is sometimes too irritable and too evil to be so of himself, but he becomes so through the most zealous endeavours of the Devil. Only watch yourself or others at the time of irritation and wickedness, when you yourself or anyone else would wish to destroy the person who is inimical to you, really or in your imagination; compare this state with that which follows it (sometimes soon afterwards by the action of your Guardian Angel, tranquillity, meekness and kindness, either in yourself or in anyone whom you watch) with the former opposite condition, and you will say to yourself: "No, this seems quite a different man from him, who, not long ago, was so full of evil and rage; this man is the one 'out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus [meek and humble], clothed and in his right mind.' [2] In him there is not even a shadow of the former wickedness and the former foolishness!" Some deny the existence of evil spirits; but such phenomena in the human life clearly prove their existence. If every phenomenon has its corresponding reason, and if the tree is to be judged by its fruits, then who will not see in the madly-infuriated man the presence of the evil spirit, who cannot show himself otherwise than in a manner worthy of him? Who will not see the chief of all evil in the outpouring of anger? Besides

[1] Numbers xxiii. 19. [2] St. Luke viii. 35.

this, a man subjected to irritability and breathing malice clearly feels the presence of a hostile evil power in his breast; it produces in the soul quite the reverse of that which has been said by the Saviour of His own presence: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light."[1] By the presence of the former spirit one feels ill at ease and oppressed, both in body and soul.

You hear in church oftener than anything the voices of the priests, deacons, readers, and singers praying God to have mercy upon us. What does this signify? It signifies that all of us who are in God's Temple are deserving, by our sins, of God's punishment, and that before everything—on our coming into the church—we must remember that we are sinners, and have come to the Lord of Heaven and Earth, to our Creator and Benefactor, Whom we have daily and hourly angered by our iniquities, to ask for mercy, each one for himself, and also, in accordance with Christian love, for others. The prayers asking for mercy are called in the Russian orthodox Church "great," "small," and "redoubled." As there is not a single superfluous word in the church service, it is especially necessary at the time of the singing of the redoubled litany to pray to God most fervently, from the very depths of a most contrite heart, as we are reminded at the very beginning of the litany by the words: "Let us say with our whole souls and with our whole understanding." At this time we must lay aside even the slightest coldness, the slightest inattention of heart, and, burning with the spirit of humility, becoming all attention, offer up to the Creator our most fervent prayers to have mercy upon us sinners. But what do we see at the time of the exclamations of the priest and the singing by the singers of the great and redoubled litany? For the greater part, the usual inattention and indifference on the part of those praying.

As after having unworthily communicated, so also after having prayed unworthily and coldly, our soul feels equally ill at ease. This means that God does not enter our heart, being offended at its unbelief and coldness, and allows the evil spirit to nestle in our hearts, in order to make us feel the difference between His own presence and its yoke.

A terrible truth. Impenitent sinners after their death lose every possibility of changing for good, and therefore remain unalterably given up to everlasting torments (for sin cannot but torment). How is this proved? It is plainly proved by the actual state of some sinners and by the nature of sin itself—to keep the man its prisoner and to close every

[1] St. Matthew xi. 30.

outlet to him. Who does not know how difficult it is, without God's special grace, for a sinner to turn from the way of sin that is so dear to him into the path of virtue? How deeply sin takes root in the heart of the sinner, and in all his being! how it gives the sinner its own way of looking at things, by means of which he sees them quite differently to what they are in reality, and shows him everything in a kind of alluring light! It is for this reason that we see that sinners very often do not even think of their conversion, and do not consider themselves to be great sinners, because their eyes are blinded by their self-love and pride. And if they do consider themselves sinners, then they give themselves up to the most terrible despair, which overwhelms their mind with thick darkness and greatly hardens their heart. But for the grace of God, what sinner would have returned to God? For it is the nature of sin to darken our souls, to bind us hand and foot. But the time and place for the action of grace is here alone: after death there remain only the prayers of the Church, and these prayers can be efficacious for penitent sinners alone—that is, only for those who have developed in their souls the capability of receiving God's mercy or of benefiting by the prayers of the Church—that is, the light of the good works which they have taken with them out of this life. Impenitent sinners are undoubtedly sons of perdition. What does my experience tell me when I am the prisoner of sin? I am tormented sometimes the whole day, and cannot turn to God with my whole heart, because sin hardens my heart, making God's mercy inaccessible to me. I burn in the fire, and willingly remain in it, because sin has bound my powers, and I—like one inwardly chained—am unable to turn to God until He, seeing my helplessness, my humility, and my tears, takes pity on me and bestows His grace upon me. It is not without reason that a man given over to sin is spoken of as "delivered into chains of darkness."[1]

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Your spiritual life is clearly divided into two states, differing acutely one from the other: into a state of peace, joy, expansion of heart, and into a state of suffering, fear and contraction of heart. The causes of the first state are the actions of your soul when in conformity with the Creator's laws; and the cause of the second state, the transgression of His holy laws. I always can and do notice the beginning of one or the other state; I have the consciousness of the one and the other state. Therefore it always happens that by doing away with the reasons from which the state of suffering and contraction of heart have proceeded, the consequences—that is, the suffering and the contraction of the soul—are also done away with.

[1] 2 Peter ii. 4.

"Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates."[1] Truly, Christ dwells in me. Meanwhile, I have until now been a reprobate; I did not think and was not firmly convinced that the Lord is in me. It is He, the All-Holy, that is so sensitive in me to the slightest impurity of heart; it is He Who incites me to drive away from my soul the very germ of sin in the heart. But, alas! Satan is also there, ready to devour me at every step, and contest me from God.

When you are struck by other people's suffering, and the contraction of their souls, so that you are induced to pray for them with a pitying and contrite heart, pray to God to have mercy upon them and to forgive them their sins, as you would pray for the forgiveness of your own sins—that is, implore God with tears to pardon them; likewise pray for the salvation of others as you would pray for your own salvation. If you attain to this and make it a habit, you will receive from God an abundance of spiritual gifts, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, Who loves the soul that cares for the salvation of others, because He Himself, the most Holy Spirit, wishes to save us all in every possible way, if only we do not oppose Him, and do not harden our hearts. "The Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."[2]

We often hear from others, or sometimes read in the works of others, what God has placed in our mind and heart, what we ourselves have cherished—that is, we often meet our favourite thoughts in others, and it seems to us as though they had been taken away from us, as though they had been new ones and formed our own exclusive property. Presumptuous thoughts! What? Is there not only one God, the Lord of all intellects? Is not His Spirit in all who seek for truth? Have we not one sole Enlightener, "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."[3] Glory to the one God, Glory to Him Who loves all and bountifully bestows upon all His spiritual and bodily gifts! Glory to Him who is no respecter of persons and Who reveals the mysteries of His love, omnipotence and wisdom unto babes![4]

God's saints are near to believing hearts and, like the truest and kindest of friends, are ready in a moment to help the faithful and pious who call upon them with faith and love. We have for the most part to send, and have sometimes to wait long for earthly helpers, whilst we have not to send for nor wait long for spiritual helpers: the faith of Him who prays can place them

[1] 2 Corinthians xiii. 5, 13. [2] Romans viii. 26. [3] St. John i. 9.
[4] St. Luke x. 21.

close to his very heart in a moment, and he will as speedily receive through faith full spiritual help. In saying this, I speak by experience; by this I mean the frequent deliverance from affliction of heart through the intercession and patronage of the saints, and especially through the intercession of Our Lady, the Holy Virgin Mary. Probably some would say that this is the action of simple and firm faith, and a determined assurance in our deliverance from affliction, and not the intercession of the saints for us before God. No, it is not so. How can this be proved? It can be proved by the fact that if I do not call upon the saints known to me in hearty prayer, without making any distinction, if I do not see them with my spiritual vision, then I shall obtain no help, however great assurance I may have felt of being saved without their help. I recognise, I feel clearly, that I receive help through the names of those saints upon whom I have called, because of my lively faith in them. This happens just as everything happens in the usual order of earthly things. First, I see my helpers by means of earnest faith; then, seeing them, I pray to them also with my whole heart, invisibly but intelligibly to myself; after this, having received invisible help in quite an imperceptible manner, but sensibly to my soul, I simultaneously receive a strong conviction that this help has been obtained from them, just as a sick man, cured by a doctor, is convinced that he has been cured precisely by that doctor, and not by anyone else; that his illness has passed away not by itself, but through the help of this particular doctor. All this comes to pass so simply that it is only necessary to have eyes in order to see.

I am a man—and the grace, the truth and the righteousness of God are continually working within me. It is God Who at one time cherishes and comforts me, and at another punishes and afflicts me with sorrows for any inward motion of the soul adverse to Him. But the earth is full of men like me. Therefore, in them also God manifests His mercy, truth and righteousness, as in myself. "He worketh all in all."[1]

Let no one think that sin is something unimportant—no, sin is a terrible evil, that destroys the soul, both now and in the future life. The sinner in the future life will be bound hand and foot (meaning the soul) and cast into outer darkness. As the Saviour said: "Bind him hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness;"[2] that is, he entirely loses the freedom of his spiritual powers, which, being created for free activity, suffer through this a kind of overwhelming inactivity for every

[1] Corinthians xii. 6. [2] St. Matthew xxii. 13.

good work: in his soul the sinner recognises his powers and at the same time he feels that these powers are bound by unbreakable chains—"he shall be holden with the cords of his sin."[1] To this must be added the terrible torment arising from the very sins themselves, from the consciousness of our own foolishness during the earthly life, and from the image of the angry Creator. Even in this present life sin binds and destroys the soul. What God-fearing man does not know what sorrow and oppression strike his soul, what torturing, burning fire rages in his breast when he has sinned? But besides binding and destroying the soul as it does temporarily, sin also destroys it eternally if we do not repent here of our sins and our iniquities from our whole heart. Here is also a proof by experience that sin destroys the soul temporarily and eternally. If it happens to any God-fearing person to go to sleep without having repented of the sin, or the sins, he has committed during the day, and which have tormented his soul, these torments will accompany him the whole night, until he has heartily repented of his sin, and washed his heart with tears (this is also from experience). The torments of sin will wake him up from sweet sleep, because his soul will be oppressed, bound a prisoner by sin. Now, suppose that the man who has gone to sleep in any sin and is tormented by it, is overtaken during the night by death: is it not clear that his soul will go into the other life in torment, and that as after death there is no place for repentance, he will be tormented there according to the measure of his sins? The Holy Scriptures also testify to this.[2]

Watch yourselves—your passions especially—in your home life, where they appear freely, like moles in a safe place. Outside our own home, some of our passions are usually screened by other more decorous passions, whilst at home there is no possibility of driving away these black moles that undermine the integrity of our soul.

For the soul of the pious, God-fearing man there is an invisible spiritual intercourse with God. Like a father or a stern teacher, the Lord at one time approves, at another condemns our thoughts, desires and intentions; at one time He says that this is good, and that bad. He rewards us for the good and punishes us for the evil; and all this is at once evident to the soul.

Begin to fulfil the commandments relating to small things, and you will come to fulfil the commandments relating to great

[1] Proverbs v. 22. [2] St. Matthew xxv. 46.

things: small things everywhere lead to great ones. Begin by fulfilling the commandment of fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, or the tenth commandment relating to evil thoughts and desires, and you will eventually learn to fulfil all the commandments. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."[1]

A man that only dreams of this perishable life and does not think of the eternal, heavenly life! Consider—what is your transitory life? It is a constant laying in of fuel (meaning food) in order that the fire of our life may continue to burn and should not grow feeble, in order that our house (meaning the body) should keep warm, and that the continually changing life of our body should be restored by means of the nourishing parts of the organs of other living creatures, who are deprived of life in order to keep up the life of our body. Indeed, what an insignificant cobweb your life is, man! You are obliged twice daily to strengthen the interior of your body by means of supports to keep it sound (that is, you are obliged to fortify yourself twice every day by food and drink), and every night, daily, you must lock up your soul in your body, shutting up all the sensations of the body, like the shutters of a house, in order that the soul may not live outside the body, but within it, giving it warmth and life. What a cobweb your life is, and how easy it is to tear it asunder! Be humble and reverent before the Life eternal!

Truth is the foundation of everything that has been created. Let truth be also the foundation of all your works (both inward and outward), and especially the foundation of your prayers. Let all your life, all your works, all your thoughts, and all your desires be founded upon truth.

Take the trouble to spend only one single day according to God's commandments, and you will see yourself, you will feel by your own heart, how good it is to fulfil God's will (and God's will in relation to us is our life, our eternal blessedness). Love God with all your heart at least as much as you love your father, your mother, and your benefactors; value with all your strength His love and His benefits to you (go over them mentally in your heart, think how He gave you existence and with it all good things, how endlessly long He bears with your sins, how endlessly He forgives you them; for the sake of your hearty repentance, by virtue of the suffering and death upon the Cross of His only-begotten Son, what blessedness He has promised you in eternity, if you are faithful to Him); enumerate besides His mercies, which are endlessly great and manifold. Furthermore, love

[1] St. Luke xvi. 10.

every man as yourself—that is, do not wish him anything that you would not wish for yourself; think, feel for him just as you would think and feel for your own self; do not wish to see in him anything that you do not wish to see in yourself; do not let your memory keep in it any evil caused to you by others, in the same way as you would wish that the evil done by yourself should be forgotten by others; do not intentionally imagine either in yourself or in another anything guilty or impure; believe others to be as well-intentioned as yourself, in general, if you do not see clearly that they are evilly disposed; do unto them as you would to yourself, or even do not do unto them as you would not do unto yourself, and then you will see what you will obtain in your heart—what peace, what blessedness! You will be in paradise before reaching it—that is, before the paradise in heaven you will be in the paradise on earth. "The kingdom of God is within you,"[1] says the Lord. "He that dwelleth in love," teaches the Apostle, "dwelleth in God and God in him."[2]

"Worship God in spirit and in truth." In truth, for instance, when you say, "Hallowed be Thy Name." Do you really desire that God's name should be hallowed by the good works of others and by your own? When you say, "Thy Kingdom come," do you indeed desire the coming of God's Kingdom? Do you wish to be the abode of the Spirit of God, and not the abode of sin? Would you not more willingly live in sin? When you say, "Thy will be done," do you not rather seek your own will than that of God? Ay, it is so! When you say, "Give us this day our daily bread," do you not say otherwise in your heart, "I do not need to ask this of Thee—I have enough without asking; let the poor ask for this"? Or else, do we not greedily seek for more, and are not satisfied with the little, or with that which God has given us? We do not thank God for what we have as we ought to. In the prayer: "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," do you not think in yourself: "God knows that I am not such a great sinner. It seems to me that I do not live any worse than others, and there is no need for me to ask that my trespasses or sins should be forgiven"? Or else when you thus pray is there not any displeasure or anger in your heart against anyone?—for if so, you lie shamelessly to God in your prayer. You say, "And lead us not into temptation," but do you not yourself rush impetuously into every sin, without even being tempted? You say, "Deliver us from evil," but do you not live in friendship with the Devil or with evil of every kind, of which the Devil is chief? Beware, then, that your tongue is not in discordance with your heart; see that you do not lie to God in your prayer. Always keep this in view when you say the

[1] St. Luke xvii. 21. [2] 1 John iv. 16.

Lord's Prayer, as well as when you say other prayers. Watch whether your heart agrees with everything that your tongue pronounces.

The purer the heart is, the larger it is, and the more able it is to find room within it for a greater number of beloved ones; whilst the more sinful it is, the more contracted it becomes, and the less number of beloved can it find room for, because it is limited by self-love, and that love is a false one; we love ourselves in objects unworthy of the immortal soul—in silver and gold, in adultery, in drunkenness, and such like.

If God communicates an invincible, incomprehensible Divine power to the Life-giving Cross, then why should it be wonderful that He communicates a similar incomprehensible power, in order to regenerate our nature, to the most pure, terrible and Life-giving Sacrament of His Body and Blood? O, how great art Thou, Lord! and how wonderful are Thy works! How endless is Thy omnipotence! Whatever is touched by Thy power and Thy grace becomes life-giving.

If you wish to correct anyone from his faults, do not think of correcting him solely by your own means: you would only do harm by your own passions, for instance, by pride and by the irritability arising from it; "but cast thy burden upon the Lord,"[1] and pray to God "Who trieth the hearts and reins,"[2] with all your heart, that He Himself may enlighten the mind and heart of that man. If He sees that your prayer breathes love, and that it really comes from the depth of your heart, He will infallibly fulfil the desire of your heart, and you yourself will soon tell, seeing the change that has taken place in him for whom you have prayed, that it is the work of "the right hand of God, the most High."[3]

Who is it that so wisely, delicately and beautifully arranges and transforms the ugly—that is, the sightless, formless substance of the earth into flowers? Who gives them their wonderful forms? Creator, grant that we may salute in the flowers Thy wisdom, Thy goodness, Thine omnipotence.

Our inward disposition, even when unexpressed by outward signs, strongly affects the inward disposition of others. This very often happens, though it is not everyone that notices it. Supposing that I am angry, or that I have unkind thoughts of another; he feels it, and begins likewise to have unkind

[1] Psalm lv. 22. [2] Psalm vii. 9. [3] Psalm lxxvii. 10.

thoughts about me. There is a certain communication between our souls, besides our bodily senses. As regards the action of our soul upon others through the senses, it would seem that one soul can act wonderfully upon another man through the sense of sight, even when he is at a distance from us, but as long as he is accessible to our sight, and is alone at the time when we direct our gaze upon him. Thus by the eye we can place another man in an awkward position, and confuse him. It has happened to me more than once to look fixedly out of the window of my house at the people passing by, and they, as if drawn by some power to the very window from which I was looking, looked round at the window, seeking to find a human face in it; whilst others became confused, suddenly quickened their pace, and set themselves to rights, readjusting their neckerchiefs, hats, etc.; there is some kind of mystery in this.

Observe the difference between the presence of the life-giving spirit and the presence of the spirit that deadens and destroys your soul. When there are good thoughts in your soul you feel happy and at ease; when peace and joy are in your heart, then the spirit of good, the Holy Ghost, is within you; whilst when evil thoughts or evil motions of the heart arise within you, you feel ill at ease and oppressed; when you are inwardly troubled, then the spirit of evil, the crafty spirit, is within you. When the spirit of evil is in us, then, together with oppression of heart and disturbance, we generally feel a difficulty in drawing near to God in our heart, because the evil spirit binds our soul, and will not let it raise itself to God. The evil spirit is a spirit of doubt, unbelief—of passions, oppression, grief and disturbance; whilst the spirit of good is one of undoubting faith, of virtue, of spiritual freedom and breadth—a spirit of peace and joy. Know by these tokens when the Spirit of God is within you, and when the spirit of evil, and, as often as possible, raise your grateful heart to the most Holy Spirit that gives you life and light, and flee with all your power from doubt, unbelief, and the passions through which the evil serpent, the thief and destroyer of our souls, creeps in.

Sometimes in the lives of pious Christians there are hours when God seems to have entirely abandoned them—hours of the power of darkness; and then the man from the depths of his heart cries unto God: "Why hast Thou turned Thy face from me, Thou everlasting Light? For a strange darkness has covered me, the darkness of the accursed evil Satan, and has obscured all my soul. It is very grievous for the soul to be

in his torturing darkness, which gives a presentiment of the torments and darkness of hell. Turn me, O Saviour, to the light of Thy commandments and make straight my spiritual way, I fervently pray Thee."

If you do not yourself experience the action of the wiles of the evil spirit, you will not know, and will not appreciate and value as you ought, the benefits bestowed upon you by the Holy Spirit: not knowing the spirit that destroys, you will not know the Spirit that gives life. Only by means of direct contrasts of good and evil, of life and death, can we clearly know the one and the other: if you are not subjected to distresses and dangers of bodily or spiritual death, you will not truly know the Saviour, the Life-Giver, who delivers us from these distresses and from spiritual death. Jesus Christ is the consolation, the joy, the life, the peace and the breadth of our hearts! Glory to God, the Most Wise and Most Gracious, that He allows the spirit of evil and death to tempt and torment us! Otherwise we should not have sufficiently appreciated and valued the comfort of grace, the comfort of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, the Life-Giving!

The Lord God, as Life itself and the superabundance of Life, everlastingly the same, as has been said by St. Gregory the Theologian, moves and remains in the Three Persons—that is, God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. You ask how there can be Three Persons in God. I answer: I do not understand how; but I know that it must be so and cannot be otherwise. You further ask: why is the Third Person in God called the Spirit, and why is He a separate Person, when, without this, God is a Spirit? I answer: God's Spirit is called Spirit in relation to His creatures. God breathed through the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, and there appeared at His call an innumerable multitude of spirits. "All the host of them by the breathing of His mouth."[1] He breathed through His Spirit into the human structure, "and man became a living soul;"[2] and from this breath men were born and will yet be born until the end of the world, according to the commandment: "Be fruitful and multiply."[3] If by His Holy Spirit God has created such separate individual creatures, then how can the Holy Ghost be other than a separate Person or an individual creating Being Himself? "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born

[1] Psalm xxxiii. 6. [2] Genesis ii. 3. [3] Genesis i. 28.

of the Spirit."[1] You see that the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit as one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. If there are innumerable multitudes of created individual spirits, then why should God Himself remain without a spirit, as without One of the Persons of the Trinity, separate and independent? Is not the Son the Wisdom of the Father, personal and living, indispensable to God? Look upon yourself. You are a creature; and even in you there is such wisdom that many wonder at it; sometimes you even create wonderful things, and you are extolled as the creator of these things. And yet this is only you, an insignificant, infirm creature. Then consider how can there not be a personal Wisdom in God?—how can God be a Creator without His own Living, Independent Wisdom? Look upon everything in the world, how wise everything is!—how in the smallest things you may notice the amazing wisdom and the wonderful work of the All-Wise thought with its marvellous accuracy and irreproachable neatness! How can God be without a Personal Wisdom? Consider, how can God, Who has created a multitude of reasonable, individual, wise, living creatures, not engender for Himself a Personal Wisdom? Is it possible? Is it reasonable? Is it in accordance with all the other perfections of the Creator? Thus in God there must be a Personal Wisdom, or the Personal Word of the Father, as well as the Life-giving Holy Ghost, Who proceedeth from the Father and Who resteth in the Son. In you there is breath, material and impersonal, while in God, as the Life Itself, there is a Personal Spirit, not diffusible, but single and giving life to everything.

The unnatural mastery of the flesh over the spirit is expressed, amongst other things, by the fact that the spirit is as though buried within the flesh, and is bound by it. This is especially visible when the matter relates to God's service; then the man mostly draws near to God with his lips only—that is, with his flesh, falsely, and not with his heart, not with his spirit, and thus does not worship Him truly. Indeed, we often so live as though we had no spirit in us, and the highest degree of human depravity is manifested by the fact that the spirit is completely stifled and the man becomes as though he were flesh alone. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh."[2] Look more closely into the matter of men's reverence for God; you will see how in this respect the flesh endeavours to dominate over the spirit. In the saints we see the dominance of the spirit over the flesh, because they live by the spirit and see the spirit throughout the whole world, the Wisdom, the

[1] St. John iii. 8. [2] Genesis vi. 3.

Omnipotence, and Goodness of God; they see in every phenomenon, in every work, the impress of the spirit. In sensual men the dominance of the flesh over the spirit is shown by their only seeing that which represents itself to their senses; in fact, as the saying is, they do not see beyond their nose. The carnal, sensual man looks at the world and sees it like an unreasoning animal: he does not marvel at the Wisdom, the everlasting Power and the Goodness of the Creator, as shown in it; when he reads a holy book, he sees in it only the letters; when he prays he says the prayers mechanically, without penetrating into their spirit: he does not know the art of worshipping in spirit and in truth. The flesh predominates also in men's education. (Look, are pupils in the schools taught that which concerns the Christian more than anything—Prayer? Are they taught to see God?) The flesh will prevail in the world until the end of ages. "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"[1] And unbelief is the work of the flesh, as it was in the beginning of the world.

It is pleasing to God when a man begins to notice His action in the heart, because He is the Light and the Truth, whilst the Devil especially fears this, being himself darkness and falsehood; and the darkness cannot come to the light for fear its doings shall be revealed. The Devil is powerful only through darkness, deceit, and falsehood; reveal his falsehood, place it before the light, and all will disappear. He induces men into every passion through deceit, and thus he lulls them to sleep and prevents their seeing things in their true light. The Devil's covering lies over many things.

Why does not the sinful soul obtain remission of its sins before it feels all their foolishness, all their destructiveness, and all their falsity from the whole heart? Because the heart is our soul; as it committed the sins, finding them at the time pleasant and plausible, therefore it must now repent of them and recognise them as leading to destruction and entirely wrong. This repentance is accomplished painfully in the heart, as the desire to sin is also usually in the heart.

Do not be disturbed when malice rages within you and strives to discharge itself in words of bitterness, but command it to be silent and to die within you. Otherwise, being accustomed to see your obedience and to flow from your lips, it will master you. As water standing behind an earth dam, and finding an aperture, washes it wider and wider and filters through it, if we do not strengthen the dam, or strengthen it insufficiently, at last, with

[1] St. Luke xviii. 8.

growing weakness on our part and with repeated efforts, the water gets through with greater and greater force, so that at last it becomes very difficult, and even impossible to stop it; so also with malice hidden in the heart of man: if we let it pierce through once, twice, and thrice, it will pour out more and more powerfully, and may at last break through and overflow your dam. Learn that in the soul there are waters of evil; as has been said by the Psalmist: "The waters are come in unto my soul."[1]

When you have sinned against God, and your sins torment, burn you, then seek quickly the only Sacrifice for sins, eternal and living, and lay your sins before the face of that Sacrifice. Do not think you can obtain salvation by your own means.

The Lord might have made the whole world, heaven and earth, into His own body; or instead of creating the world, He might have created for Himself a temple for His body; and it is only on your account that He deigned to create to Himself a Body similar to your own, in order to save you, and having created the world from nothing, He has also created out of a small part of it His Body to give life to you, leaving the world to remain as He created it. O goodness and mercy of God! "We are members of His Body"[2] through the communion of His life-giving Mysteries!

The world, as the work of the living, Most Wise God, is full of life. There are life and wisdom in everything, and we find everywhere the expression of thought in the whole, as also in every separate part. This is the true Book, from which, though not so clearly as from revelation, we may learn the knowledge of God. Before the world was, there was only the living infinite God. When the world was called into being from its non-existence, God, of course, did not become finite; all the fulness of life and of infinity have remained in Him. But this fulness of life and infinity are also expressed in creatures, living and organic, which are innumerable, and which are all endued with life.

The world, and especially the man, are finite. The world is only a point of rest for corporeal creatures, in order that they should not disappear into infinity.

The Holy Scriptures speak more truly and more clearly of the world than the world itself or the arrangement of the

[1] Psalm lxix. 1. [2] Ephesians v. 30.

earthly strata; the scriptures of nature within it, being dead and voiceless, cannot express anything definite. "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?"[1] Were you with God when He created the universe? "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counseller, hath taught Him?"[2] And yet you geologists boast that you have understood the mind of the Lord, in the arrangement of strata, and maintained it in spite of Holy Writ! You believe more in the dead letters of the earthly strata, in the soulless earth, than in the Divinely-inspired words of the great prophet Moses, who saw God.

You do not understand how the saints in Heaven can hear us when we pray to them. But how do the rays of the sun bend down from Heaven to us, lighting everything throughout the earth? The saints in the spiritual world are like the rays of the sun in the material world. God is the eternal, life-giving Sun, and the saints are the rays of this wise Sun. As the eyes of the Lord are constantly looking upon the earth and upon terrestrial beings, so also the eyes of the saints cannot but turn towards the same direction as the provident gaze of the Lord of all creatures towards where their treasures (their bodies, their works, the holy places, and the persons devoted to them) are to be found. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."[3] You know how quickly, how far, and how clearly the heart can see (especially the objects of the spiritual world); you notice this in all the sciences, especially in the spiritual ones, where a great deal is adopted by faith only (the vision of the heart). The heart is the eye of the human being. The purer it is, the quicker, farther, and clearer it can see. But with God's saints this spiritual eye is refined, even during their lifetime, to the highest degree of purity possible for man, and after their death, when they have become united to God, through God's grace it becomes still clearer and wider in the limits of its vision. Therefore the saints see very clearly, widely, and far: they see our spiritual wants; they see and hear all those who call upon them with their whole hearts—that is, those whose mental eyes are fixed straight upon them, and are not darkened or dimmed when so fixed by unbelief and doubt; in other words, when the eyes of the heart of those who pray, so to say, meet the eyes of those they call upon. This is a mysterious vision. He who is experienced will understand what is meant. Therefore, how easy it is to communicate with the saints! It is only necessary to purify the eye of the heart, to fix

[1] Job xxxviii. 4. [2] Isaiah xl. xiii. [3] St. Matthew vi. 21.

it firmly upon a saint known to you, to pray to him for what you want, and you will obtain it. And what is God in reference to sight? He is all sight, all light, and all knowledge. He everlastingly fills both Heaven and earth, and sees everything in every place. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."[1]

A hearty belief in the spiritual world, especially in the all-enlightening and all-life-giving Sun, rejoices and vivifies the soul that possesses a pure conscience. Faith ought to reach the eye of the heart; this means that the soul ought to stand as though it were higher than anything sensual, higher than anything carnal, higher than its dark nature, and ought to penetrate with as pure a vision of the heart as possible into the spiritual world. Here it will be happy, for here is its true life, its peace and its joy. This is from experience.

Imagination and representation are the vision of the heart, or of the soul, creating or reproducing a certain object; therefore this vision is rapid, instantaneous, and bears a spiritual character. It is a photograph made by the soul of a certain object. The mind is an artist, taking a photograph from it.

If the Lord were not long-suffering, if He were not the Lover of men, would He have borne with our great offences? would He have been incarnate? would He have suffered and died for you? would He have given you His most pure Body and Blood, upon which even the angels look with fear and trembling? would He have saved you from sin and spiritual death so many innumerable times? Had it been otherwise He would have said: "Be tormented, if you are so evil by nature; I will not deliver you again after having delivered you so often before." But now, during all our life-time He bears with our innumerable offences, and still waits for our conversion. Glorify, then, His love and long-suffering. Picture to yourself what it would have been without Him, without Him to save? Horror and trembling fill the soul at the idea of it. But impenitent sinners will indeed be overtaken at the last by God's wrath "in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."[2]

When you are about to pray to Our Lady the Holy Virgin, be firmly assured, before praying, that you will not depart from Her without having received mercy. To think thus and to have confidence in Her is meet and right. She is, the All-merciful Mother of the All-merciful God, the Word, and Her mercies, incalculably great and innumerable, have been declared from all

[1] Proverbs xi. 3. [2] Romans ii. 5.

ages by all Christian Churches ; She is, indeed, an abyss of mercies and bounties, as is said of Her in the canon of Odigitry.[1] Therefore to pray to Her without such assurance would be foolish and audacious, for doubt would offend Her goodness, just as God's goodness is offended when people pray to Him without hoping to receive what they pray for. How do people hurry for alms to any great and rich man whose kindness is well known, and has been proved on many occasions? Generally with the most perfect assurance and hope of receiving from Him that which they desire. Likewise, in praying we must neither doubt nor be faint-hearted.

As a mother teaches her child to walk, so also God teaches us to have a living faith in Him. A mother will make the child stand, and leave it for a while by itself, then she will tell it to come to her. The child cries without its mother ; it wants to go to her, but is afraid to attempt to move its feet ; it tries to walk, makes a step, and falls down. God teaches the Christian faith in Him in a like manner (faith being the spiritual way) ; our faith is as weak, as elementary as the child beginning to walk. The Lord leaves the man without His help and gives him up to the Devil, or to various distresses and afflictions, and afterwards, when he is in extreme need of help of being delivered from them (for we are not ready to go to Him until we are in need of salvation), He bids us look on Him (we must absolutely look upon Him) and come to Him for that help. The Christian endeavours to do so ; he opens the eyes of his heart (just as the child moves its feet) and tries to see the Lord by means of them, but his heart, not being taught how to see God, is afraid of its own boldness, and stumbles and falls. The enemy and inborn sinful corruptions close the newly-opened eyes of his heart and cut him off from God, so that he cannot approach Him, though God is near, ready to take him into His arms ; only God must be approached with faith, and an effort must be made to see Him fully with the spiritual eyes of faith. Then He will Himself stretch out His helping hand, will take the man into His arms and drive away the enemies. Then the Christian feels that he has fallen into the arms of the Saviour Himself. Glory be to Thy goodness and wisdom, Lord ! Thus during the efforts of the Devil against us, and in every affliction, we must see clearly with the eyes of the heart, as if He stood before us, the Saviour, the Lover of men ; and look upon Him with boldness as upon our inexhaustible treasury of goodness and mercies, and pray to Him with all our hearts, that He may give us a portion of this inexhaustible fountain of blessings and of spiritual help ; and we shall immediately obtain what we are praying for. The chief thing is faith, or the spiritual vision

[1] The Canon-Song v. 1.

of the Lord and the hope of receiving everything from Him, as the Most-merciful, the Most-true. This is the truth! This is from experience! By these means God also teaches us to acknowledge our extreme moral infirmity without Him, to be contrite in heart, and constantly in a prayerful frame of mind!

The Christian has no reason to have in his heart any ill-feeling whatever against anyone—such ill-feeling, like every other evil, is the work of the Devil; the Christian must only have love in his heart; and as love cannot think of evil, he cannot have any ill-feeling against others. For instance, I must not think that anyone else is evil or proud without having positive reasons to think so, or I must not think that it will make him proud if I show him respect, or that if I forgive him he will again offend me and will mock at me. We must not let evil in any form nestle in our heart; but evil generally appears in too many forms.

24/12/94

The peace and plenteousness of life in the heart after communion is the greatest, the most inestimable gift of our Lord Jesus Christ, surpassing all the gifts relating to the body which are received at the same time. Without peace of the soul—when the heart is straitened and tormented—the man cannot avail himself of any blessings, either material or spiritual; at that time the delights that come from the feeling of truth, goodness, and beauty do not exist for him, because the very centre of his life—the heart, or the inner man himself—is crushed and slain.

Unite your soul to God by means of hearty faith and you will be able to accomplish everything. Do powerful, invisible, ever-watchful enemies wage war against you? You will conquer them. Are these enemies visible, outward? You will conquer them also. Do passions rend you? You will overcome them. Are you crushed with sorrows? You will get over them. Have you fallen into despondency? You will obtain courage. With faith you will be able to conquer everything, and even the Kingdom of Heaven will be yours. Faith is the greatest blessing of the earthly life; it unites the man to God, and makes him strong and victorious through Him. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit."[1]

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God in His goodness has granted to us, undeserving as we are, to see the sun and its light, and allows us to enjoy it. He will grant to us also to enjoy His own inaccessible light. Let the light of the sun be a pledge to us of this, but especially the tranquil light of the holy glory of the Heavenly Father, His only Son, given to us, and the spirit of love bestowed upon our hearts.

[1] 1 Corinthians vi. 17.

What do I see when I look upon God's world? I see everywhere the extraordinary breadth, the sportiveness of life; in the animal kingdom, amongst quadrupeds, reptiles, insects, birds, and fishes. Now, it may be asked, why should there be this narrowness and sorrowful way of life for man, especially for the man who is zealous and pious? God has everywhere plenteously diffused life, abundance, and gladness, and all creatures, with the exception of men, glorify the Creator by their abundance, their life, and sportive joy. Why, then, is there this discordance between me and the general life? Am I not the creature of the same Creator? The solution of this question is simple. Our life is poisoned, either through our own fault by sin, or by the incorporeal enemy, and especially and chiefly by him in regard to those who have given themselves up to a life of piety. The life of the man—of the true Christian—is in the future, in after ages; there every joy and full blessedness will be opened to him. But here he is only an exile, and is under punishment; here sometimes the whole of nature takes up arms against man for his sins, not to speak of the enemy from time immemorial, who "as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."[1] Therefore I am not disturbed by the fact that there are joy and abundance everywhere throughout the world, while in myself alone there is often no gladness, so that I look morosely upon the gladness and freedom of God's creatures. I have within me an executioner for my sins—he is ever with me, and strikes me. But there will be joys for me also, only not here, but in the other world.

Looking upon God's world, I see everywhere God's extraordinary bountifulness in the gifts of nature: the surface of the earth is like the richest table, prepared with abundance and variety by the most loving and generous of hosts. The depths of the waters also serve to feed the man. What shall be said of the animals, quadrupeds, and birds? And what bountifulness is manifested in providing food and clothes for man! The Lord's mercies are innumerable. Look at all the earth supplies in summer and in autumn! Every Christian, especially the priest, ought to imitate God's bountifulness. Let your table be open to everybody, like the table of the Lord. The avaricious is God's enemy.

The tree firmly fixed in the earth by its roots grows and brings forth fruit. The soul of a man firmly fixed in God by faith and love, as by spiritual roots, also lives, grows spiritually, and brings forth the fruits of virtue pleasing to God, through which the soul lives now and shall live in the

[1] 1 Peter v. 8.

future world. The tree, when uprooted from the ground, ceases to live by the life which it received from the heart through the roots. Similarly, the soul of the man which has lost faith and love to God and does not dwell in God, in Whom alone it can live, spiritually dies. What the earth is to the plants God is to the soul.

In order not to be in daily bondage to the passions and the Devil, you must set yourself an object to aim at, have this object constantly in view, and endeavour to attain it, conquering all obstacles by the name of the Lord. What is this object? The Kingdom of God, the Divine palace of glory, prepared for believers from the creation of the world. But as this object can only be attained by certain means, it also is necessary to have such means at one's disposal. And what are these means? Faith, hope, and love, especially the last. Believe, hope, and love, especially love, disregarding all obstacles; love God above everything and your neighbour as yourself. If you have not sufficient strength to preserve in your heart these inestimable treasures, fall down oftener at the feet of the God of Love. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"[1]—for He Who has promised is true. Walking, sitting, lying down, conversing, or working, at every time, pray with your whole heart that faith and love may be given to you. You have not yet asked for them as you should ask—fervently and instantly, with the firm purpose of obtaining them. Say now, "I will begin to do so henceforth."

When on your way to God you meet obstacles raised up by the Devil: doubt and unbelief of heart, also a thorough ill-feeling, sometimes towards persons worthy of absolute respect and love, as well as other passions. Do not be disturbed by them, but know that it is but the smoke of the enemy, which will be dispersed at a sign from our Lord Jesus Christ.

What should be our chief care in the education of the young? We must chiefly endeavour that the eyes of their understanding should be enlightened.[2] Do you not notice that our heart acts first in our life and in nearly all our knowledge? The heart sees certain truths (ideas) before the mind knows them. When knowledge is acquired, it happens thus: the heart sees at once, indivisibly, instantaneously; afterwards this single action of the sight of the heart is transmitted to the intellect and subdivided in

[1] St. Matthew vii. 7, 8. [2] Ephesians i. 18.

the intellect into parts or sections, preceding and subsequent; the sight of the heart is analysed in the intellect. The idea belongs to the heart and not to the intellect; that is, to the inner man, and not to the outer one. Therefore, to have the eyes of their understanding enlightened[1] is a very important matter in acquiring all knowledge, but especially in that of the truths of faith and of the laws of morality.

The future life is the perfect purity of the heart, which is now only gradually purified, and which is at present more often shut and darkened by sin and by the Devil's breathing into it, and only at times, under the influence of God's grace, brightens and sees God, being united to Him most truly during prayer and in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion.

How should we keep the festivals? We must celebrate in them either the event (with a view of investigating the greatness of the event, its object, and the fruits it brought to those who believe) or the person; as, for instance, our Lord, the Mother of God, the angels and saints (with the view of investigating the relation of that person to God and to mankind and his beneficial influence upon God's Church in general). It is necessary to investigate the history of the event or of the person whose festival we solemnise, to approach it or him with our whole heart, to absorb them, so to say, into ourselves; otherwise the festival will be incomplete, and not pleasing to God. The festivals ought to influence our life, to vivify and kindle our faith in future blessings, and maintain in us a pious and gentle disposition. Yet they are mostly spent in sin and folly and met with unbelieving, cold hearts, often wholly unprepared to feel the great mercies which God has vouchsafed to us through the particular event or person whose festival is celebrated.

It may happen that there is much wickedness in your soul. But let it be known to God alone, Who knows everything that is secret and concealed, and do not show all your uncleanness to others; do not corrupt them by the breath of the wickedness concealed within you. Tell God your grief, that your soul is full of wickedness, and that your life is near to hell, but to other people show a bright and pleasant countenance. What have they to do with your madness? Or declare your soul's sickness to your confessor or to a true friend, so that they may teach you, guide you, and restrain you.

Gazing upon heaven, contemplate in its heights the Lord Jesus, for it was from there that He appeared to the pro-martyr

[1] Ephesians i. 18.

Stephen and to Saul, and pray to Him to save you. These appearances of His do not show that He only then opened the heavens and looked down upon these saints through the heavens thus opened, but they show that He is always looking down from the heavens upon us all and sees our actions, words, thoughts, and intentions, as you must have been convinced on many occasions from your own experience when you lifted up your eyes to the heavens and received miraculous and great help from Him; it only means that, in the above-mentioned cases, He revealed Himself and manifested Himself in the heavens.

To sin is both detrimental and foolish; for the sinner despises himself and either turns away from human society or seeks the society of others like him, because his inner condition and the worm gnawing at his heart make any respectable society oppressive to him, as it does not correspond with the character of his own life. The sinner feels straitened in God's wide world, because the world is the work of the Most Holy and Righteous God; and the sinner who does not obey God's laws, the laws of love and peace, is an outcast from God's creation, for whom there is no place in the world. The reason why he feels so straitened is that he is pursued by God, by his own conscience, and by all creation.

Who is it that suffers through doubting, unbelieving, blasphemous thoughts: the object of which the man doubts, in which he does not believe and which he blasphemes, or the man himself, who doubts, does not believe, and blasphemes? The latter. He grows afraid with that fear of which the Psalmist speaks: "There were they brought in great fear even where no fear was."[1] He is tortured by his doubt, unbelief, and blasphemy; whilst the object of his agony remains firm, immovable, and has evidently the better of him, because it makes him change his mind for the sake of his own tranquillity, and does not allow him to grow quite calm until he has repented of his former false opinions and has accepted more favourable and truer ones. Therefore it is foolish to waver and be disturbed, and still more so to become faint-hearted and fall into despondency, when during prayer, or at any other time, doubting, unbelieving, blasphemous thoughts occur to you. They are all only enticements of Satan.

Malice, or any other passion that has taken root in your heart, has a tendency—in accordance with the infallible law of evil—to discharge itself outwardly. This is why it is usually said of an evil or angry man that he has vented his

[1] Psalm xiv. 5.

anger upon another person or upon another object. It is the worst of evil that it does not remain in the heart, but tries to diffuse itself outwardly. From this it is already evident that the author of evil is great himself, and has a wide domain over which he reigns. "The whole world lieth in wickedness."[1] Like a vapour or gases that have accumulated in a great quantity in a shut-up place strive to rush out, so also the passions, like the breathing of the spirit of evil, having filled the heart, strive to rush out of one man to pour themselves into others, and corrupt, by their ill-odour, the souls of others.

God has granted us existence--the greatest gift of His goodness, and after we had fallen away from Him, from life into death, He gave us for our regeneration, to bring us back to life, His Son. How small in proportion are all the other gifts which we ask of Him in prayer, and how easy it is for Him to give them to us at the first word of true faith, if they are really necessary for us! Therefore it is perfectly unpardonable in us if we still doubt that we shall obtain what we ask of God in prayer. The Lord said plainly: "Ask, and it shall be given you."[2]

Here in this world of vanities, in this adulterous and sinful world, our souls and bodies are continually and often imperceptibly corrupted "by moth and rust, and thieves [mental ones] break through and steal"[3] the treasures of the soul, that is: "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."[4] What is, then, the true remedy against the continual, sinful corruption of these mental thieves? The prayer of repentance and of faith It revives and vivifies our souls, corrupted by seductive carnal desires, and drives away the mental thieves; it is a scourge for them, whilst for us it is the source of power, life, and salvation. Glory to God for this! Prayer protects and delivers us from sin. It is good for us to live with the prayer of faith in our hearts, for during prayer we live with the Lord, Who has promised all good things to those who ask Him: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."[5] Glory to Thee, Lord, for Thy most true words. Lord! grant to all those who ask of Thee, through my unworthy means, the various blessings, the petitions of their hearts. Amen—so be it!

[1] 1 John v. 19. [2] St. Matthew vii. 7. [3] St. Matthew vi. 19.
[4] Romans xiv. 17. [5] St. Matthew vii. 7, 8.

If you wish that God should speedily give you hearty faith in prayer, strive with all your heart to speak and to do everything in regard to other people sincerely, and never be deceitful in your dealings with them. If you are straightforward and truthful with others, then God will give you straightforwardness and sincere faith also in reference to Himself. Him who is not straightforward in his dealings with other men God does not accept easily when he prays, making him feel that he is insincere with other men, and therefore cannot be perfectly sincere with God.

Man subjected to passions, what is it that you want? Life, you say. About what do you busy yourself? Life. But are you leading the true life? Both reason and experience oblige you to say that you are not. Then what constitutes your life? Reason and experience again tell me faith, hope, and love. The life of the soul is God. A living faith in Him and love to other men like unto myself—these are the peace and breadth of my heart; for without them I am the martyr of sin, the slave, the prisoner of passions, and my life is spent in affliction and constraint.

Even here I rest in Christ and with Christ; how, then, can I do otherwise than believe that eternal rest in Him awaits me after death, and after the struggle against earthly enemies? Here without Christ I feel oppressed and in pain; how can I do otherwise than believe that it will be still more grievous to be without Christ there, when He will finally cast me away from before His face! Thus the present state of our souls foreshadows the future. The future will be a continuation of the present inward condition, only in a modified form as to its degree: for the righteous it will be turned into the fulness of eternal glory; for sinners, into the fulness of everlasting torment.

"It is good for me to draw near to God,"[1] said David, who had tasted the sweetness of prayer and praising God. Other men confirm this, and I a sinner also. Observe, even here on earth, to draw near to God is a good and blessed thing (while we are yet in the sinful flesh, which has much that is agreeable and disagreeable in itself). Therefore, what blessedness it will be to be united to God there, in heaven! And the blessedness of union with God here on earth is a specimen and pledge of the blessedness of union with God after death, in eternity. You see, then, how good, merciful, and true the Creator is! In order

[1] Psalm lxxiii. 28.

to assure you of the future blessedness proceeding from union with Him, He allows you to experience the beginning of this blessedness here on earth when you approach Him sincerely. Yes; even here my invisible soul rests in the invisible God; therefore it will still more perfectly rest in Him when it is separated from the body.

The spirit is powerful, mighty, and therefore it easily bears a heavy substance; whilst the flesh is inert, feeble, and is therefore easily overwhelmed by its own natural substance. This is why God by the word of His power upholds all things.[1] Similarly the spirit of a man blessed with grace, by God's help, easily conquers his own flesh, and even the flesh of others (as we see in the saints), easily masters during prayer the meaning of the words, filling them with his spirit; whilst the carnal man is in constant subjection to his flesh, is oppressed by the words of the prayer, which he is unable to endue with the spirit, being flesh himself, or is unable to penetrate into its pure, holy spirit with his own impure, carnal spirit.

Man is constantly perishing through sin, and therefore he requires a constant daily Saviour. This Saviour is Jesus Christ, the Son of God; only call upon Him inwardly with living, clear-seeing faith in your salvation, and He will save you. Thus has He miraculously saved me an innumerable number of times; this salvation was as manifest as, for instance, the visit of any deliverer to a prison from which he frees the prisoner. It is necessary for a priest to experience himself the power of faith, the sweetness of prayer, and the remission of sins, and also to experience cases when prayer is unsuccessful, as well as spiritual afflictions, and the consolations of grace; so that in his prayer to God for the faithful he may say thus, "Give unto them the same blessings as those which Thou always givest to my unworthy self;" and so that he may be able to pray about everything from his own experience.

"He is near to his heart" is said of two persons of unequal rank, one of whom protects the other. And the one who has been honoured by the protection of the higher person, and by being near to his heart, knows this, and is reciprocally near him in his own heart. It is thus between God and those who serve Him with a pure heart: God is always near to their heart, and they are near God's heart. It should also be the same during the prayer of every Christian: when praying we must absolutely be near to God in our heart. All that is good and sincere in our intercourse with our fellow-men should be transferred to God.

[1] Hebrews i. 3.

Remember that you are always walking in the presence of the sweetest Lord Jesus. Say to yourself oftener: "I wish so to live that my life may gladden my Beloved, crucified for my sake on the Cross. Above all, I will take for the companion and friend of my life my Holy Beloved, Who instils everything into my heart, making me thirst for the salvation of all, rejoicing with those who rejoice, and weeping with those who weep." This will especially comfort my Comforter, Christ.

Parents and teachers! Beware and be most careful not to let your children be capricious; otherwise they will soon forget to value your love; their hearts will be corrupted with wickedness; they will soon lose holy, true, glowing love from their hearts, and, on reaching maturity, they will complain bitterly that in their youth you spoilt them too much and encouraged them in their caprices. Capriciousness is the germ of the corruption of the heart, the rust of the heart, the moth of love, the seed of evil, and an abomination to the Lord.

In the Church especially is accomplished the mystery of the cleansing from sins. Reverence, therefore, the place where your soul is cleansed from all impurities, where you are reconciled to God, where you receive the true life of the spirit. How many times the Lord has here granted me the cleansing from my sins, without which I could not have enjoyed God's gifts—the greatest of life's gifts, the gifts of peace and joy, and earthly blessings besides! Glory to Thee, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."[1]

Nothing is more changeable than matter; it changes into millions of forms, by natural means according to the laws of the Creator: not to speak of the wonderful changes, for instance, of fire into dew, of water into blood, of water into wine, of the rod into the serpent; even man sometimes changes matter into a thousand different forms. What can therefore be said of God, Who has created everything? The nature of matter is its changeableness. God does not act thus, and does not desire to act thus with a reasonable spirit: the nature of the spirit is its unchangeableness. But to strive to become perfect in good works is the act of a reasonable created spirit. It is the triumph of the spirit over matter that the spirit changes it into thousands of forms. Notice, for instance, how this spirit changes matter in the vegetable kingdom, how endlessly varying are the forms of plants, all growing out of the same soil, with the help of the same light of the sun, the same air,

[1] 1 John ii. 2.

and the same water. And the bodies of animals, how varied they are! Thus the nature of matter is changeableness; upon this condition the world was created in all its variety. Glory to the only eternally, unchangeable God, the All-powerful Creator! Had matter been unchangeable, then God would not have been All-powerful. Glory to the spiritual nature! May it ever conquer the material nature! Ask God to give you unchangeableness in all that is good.

Why is it that we always remember the offences of men, are angry and bear malice against the offenders, whilst the most wicked, the most hurtful and continual offences of the Devil we very soon forget, even though we have been thus offended by him a thousand times a day, while we bear in remembrance the offences of men sometimes for longer than a day? This is the enticement of the Devil! He knows how to deceive us cleverly: whilst offending us himself, he ever screens himself behind our own self-love, as though wishing to gratify us in the beginning by means of the development of a certain passion, though afterwards he always destroys, and bitterness comes to us from him for our foolish, unreasonable self-love. The offences of other people against us he always magnifies a hundredfold, representing them in a false light; and here again he screens himself behind our own self-love, as though he were jealous of our welfare, which other people are seeking to destroy by their offences.

Two forces, in direct opposition to each other, influence us: one good, the other evil; one life-giving and the other deadly. As both are spiritual forces, both are invisible. The good power, through my free and sincere prayer, always drives away the evil power, which is strong only through the evil concealed within me. In order not to be subjected to the continual harassments of the evil spirit, we must constantly have in our hearts this prayer to Jesus Christ: "Jesus, Son of God, have mercy upon me!" Against the invisible one (the Devil) the Invisible God, against the mighty the Mightier.

If men—weak, short-lived, mortal creatures—do so many great and wonderful acts by means of the powers and capabilities they are blessed with; if sometimes many millions of people obey the single word of one man, then what cannot the great Author of all human life do—what will not obey His word? Remember the words of the centurion: "I also," said he, "am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers: and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."[1] Further-

[1] St. Luke vii. 8.

more, if many animals are also gifted with skill to do various wonderful things which cannot even be done by a man—the animals which we trample under foot, which are insignificant and weak—then what is there that cannot be done by the Creator of everything and everybody, Who has bountifully endued all with all skill, all capabilities and powers? If the soulless grass, "which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven,"[1] is formed by His word into such delicate and beautiful shapes; if every substance we see is obedient to His word, and changes into incommensurably endless variety at His sign (by means of the five elements only); who then, seeing all this, will require greater pledges of His omnipotence? Wonderful are Thy works, O Lord, at each step and at every moment of life! Heaven and earth are full of the glory of Thy wisdom, of the glory of Thy mercy, and the glory of Thy omnipotence! Thou art not only Thyself the most wise Creator, and constantly manifestest Thyself as such, but Thou also givest the capacity of creating to Thy creatures, so that they create at Thy word, through the powers which Thou hast given them, wonderful and useful things. O, in what splendour Thou hast arrayed Thyself! How we have abased ourselves and our nature of sin!—but how dear and great we are in the sight of God! For our sakes He did not spare His own Son, but clothed Him with our flesh, gave Him our nature, for our salvation. He has prepared for us, from the creation of the world, an everlasting kingdom, and our conversion rejoices good angels. And yet what do we do? We do not even wish to know this, and abase ourselves lower and lower; we slay our souls by various vices and earthly passions. It is sad, inexpressibly sad, to look upon man—a creature created according to God's image—and sad especially to look upon the Christian, found worthy of such a high calling, so much esteemed and so loaded with benefits by God.

Forced prayer develops hypocrisy, renders a man incapable of any occupation requiring meditation, and makes him slothful in everything, even in fulfilling his duties. This should persuade all who pray in this manner to correct their mode of praying. We must pray gladly, with energy, from the whole heart. Do not pray to God only when you are obliged to, either in sorrow or in need, for "God loveth a cheerful giver."[2]

In all the temples of the bodies of pious Christians—which are not made with human hands—there is a mental light, the soul, and that light is derived from God the Wise Sun, Who is visible in the world in the same way as the soul is in the body.

[1] St. Matthew vi. 30. [2] 2 Corinthians ix. 7.

I notice how God, the mental Sun, enters and shines in my soul, for then I feel happy, warm, and bright; but when He goes away He leaves the soul in darkness and suffering. As in material nature the darkness is caused by the departure or setting of the sun, so likewise in the spiritual nature the darkness is caused by the departure of the mental Sun from the soul, and by its being covered with the darkness of the accursed one. As in material nature there is always some remainder of light after sunset, by reason of the incomparable size of the sun, so also in the soul there is some remainder of light, even after the departure of the mental Sun, by reason of His omnipresence and by reason of the comparative weakness of the prince of darkness, who, without God's permission, is unable to completely darken the soul. But we must beware also, as the Lord has said, "lest darkness come upon us"[1] completely.

When you are granted recovery from any illness, render thanks to God in the following short form of praise:—Glory to Thee, Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the everlasting Father, Who alone art able to heal all manner of sickness and disease in men, that Thou hast had mercy upon me, a sinner, and hast delivered me from my sickness, not allowing it to develop and slay me according to my sins. Grant to me, from this time forth, Master, strength to firmly fulfil Thy will, to the salvation of my accursed soul, and to Thy glory, and that of Thy everlasting Father, and of Thy consubstantial Spirit, both now and for ever, and to ages of ages. Amen.

What is a pure heart? It is meek, humble, guileless, simple, trusting, true, unsuspicious, gentle, good, not covetous, not envious, not adulterous.

My soul! remember thy heavenly dignity and do not be disturbed by corruptible, worthless things. Honour also in other people their heavenly dignity, and do not dare offend or hate them for any perishable cause; love with all thy might that which is spiritual and heavenly, and despise that which is material, earthly. Remember the words of thy Saviour: "Give us this day our daily bread"—only this day's. The highest Christian wisdom lies concealed in these words. Remember also that the Lord Himself showed during His life an example of carelessness in regard to means of subsistence, and was contented with voluntary offerings only: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."[2]

[1] St. John xii. 35.

[2] St. John iv. 34.

You hate your enemy? You are foolish. Why? Because if your enemy persecutes you, you also inwardly persecute yourself; for say, is it not persecution, and the most cruel persecution, to torture yourself by your hatred towards your enemy? Love your enemy, and you will be wise. O, if only you knew what a triumph, what blessedness it is to love your enemy, and to do good to him! So did the Son of God, so did God in the Holy Trinity, triumph, and still triumphs, through His love, over the ungrateful and evil-natured human race; so also did God's saints triumph over their enemies, by loving them and doing good to them. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. . . . . If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."[1]

Do not be despondent when fighting against the incorporeal enemy, but even in the midst of your afflictions and oppression praise the Lord, Who has found you worthy to suffer for Him, by struggling against the subtilty of the serpent, and to be wounded for Him at every hour; for had you not lived piously, and endeavoured to become united to God, the enemy would not have attacked and tormented you.

Glory to Thee, Saviour, Almighty Power! Glory to Thee, Saviour, Omnipresent Power! Glory to Thee, Fount of mercies! Glory to Thee, ever-open Hearing, ever ready to hear my prayers, accursed as I am, in order to have mercy upon me, and to save me from my sins! Glory to Thee, to Thy brightest Eyes, looking lovingly upon me and penetrating into all my secrets! Glory to Thee, Glory to Thee, Glory to Thee, sweetest Jesus, my Saviour!

Hearty faith is indispensable for man, because the light of our intellect is very limited, and cannot contain much mental light, while the Lord our God is Infinite Light, and the world is an abyss of His omnipotence and wisdom, whilst in us there is only, so to say, a drop of His power and wisdom, because only so much, and not more, can be contained of them in our perishable flesh.

The earth is hard and inert, though it revolves very fast round the sun; water is liquid and rapid, therefore people say a current is rapid; air is still more liquid, more rare-

[1] Romans v. 8, 10.

fied and more rapid, and therefore it moves very quickly, as, for instance, in the case of winds; light is still more ethereal, more rapid, and in one second it travels over incredibly great distances. If light is so ethereal and traverses immense spaces in the shortest possible time, then what must the created spirit be, and how ethereal and rapid must it be! Finally, what must the uncreated Spirit be—the Lord Himself! How immeasurable must He be! If light in one second moves with such awful rapidity, then how rapidly must the uncreated Light—the Source of all Light and of everything created—move in intelligent created spirits! Finally, how must the Light which created everything embrace all His creatures, all the multitudes of worlds! Glory to Thee, the Light immaterial and uncreated, "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."[1]

Most men not only bear Satan's burden willingly in their hearts, but they become so accustomed to it that they often do not feel it, and even imperceptibly increase it. Sometimes, however, the evil enemy increases his burden tenfold, and then they become terribly despondent and fainthearted, they murmur and blaspheme God's name. The usual means that men of our time take to drive away their anguish are—entertainments, cards, dancing, and theatres. But such means afterwards increase still more the anguish and weariness of their hearts. If, happily, they turn to God, then the burden is removed from their heart, and they clearly see that previously the heaviest burden was lying on their heart, though frequently they did not feel it. O, how many men there are who have "forsaken [God] the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no [living] water"![2] Men have very many such broken cisterns—nearly everybody has his own. The broken cisterns are our hearts, our passions.

When you see faults and passions in your neighbour, pray for him; pray for everybody, even for your enemy. If you see that your brother is proud and stubborn, and behaves proudly either to you or others, pray for him, that God may enlighten his mind and warm his heart with the fire of His grace, and say: "Lord, teach meekness and humility to Thy servant, who has fallen into Satan's pride, and drive from his heart the darkness and burden of the evil one's pride." If you see a wrathful brother, pray thus: "Lord, make this servant of Thine good through Thy grace." If a mercenary and greedy one, pray thus: "Lord, Thou Who art our incorruptible Treasury and inexhaustible Riches, grant that this servant of Thine, created according to Thy image, may

[1] St. John i. 9. [2] Jeremiah ii. 13.

recognise the deceitfulness of riches, and that, like all earthly things, they are vain, fleeting, delusive. For the days of men are like grass, or like the spider's web, and Thou alone art our riches, peace, and joy." If you see an envious man, pray Thus: "Lord, enlighten the mind and the heart of this Thy servant, that he may recognise the great, innumerable, and unsearchable gifts which he has received through Thy boundless generosity; for in the blindness of his passion he has forgotten Thee and Thy rich gifts, and although enriched with Thy benefits, yet he reckons himself poor, and looks enviously upon the blessings which Thou, O our unspeakable Benefactor, hast bestowed upon each one of Thy servants, even against their own will, but in accordance with Thy purpose. Take away, Most Gracious Master, the Devil's veil from the eyes of the heart of Thy servant; grant him contrition of heart, tears of repentance and gratitude, so that the enemy who has ensnared him alive in his toils may not rejoice over him and may not wrest him from Thy hands." If you see a drunken man, say in your heart: "Lord, look mercifully upon Thy servant, allured by the flattery of the belly and by carnal merriment; make him understand the sweetness of temperance and fasting, and of the fruit of the spirit arising therefrom." When you see a man passionately fond of eating, and finding all his happiness in this, say: "Lord, Thou art our sweetest Food, that never perishes, but leads us unto life eternal! Purify Thy servant from the filthiness of gluttony, so carnal and so far from Thy Spirit, and grant that he may know the sweetness of Thy Life-giving, spiritual food, which is Thy Flesh and Blood, and Thy holy, living, and acting word." In this or in a similar manner pray for all who sin, and do not dare to despise anyone for his sin, nor be vindictive, as through this you would only aggravate the wounds of those who sin; but rather correct them by means of such advice, threats, and punishments as may tend to stop or restrain the evil within the limits of moderation.

From the action in our heart of two antagonistic forces, one of which firmly resists the other, and forcibly and cunningly invades our heart, always slaying it, whilst the other is chastely offended at every impurity and quietly withdraws itself from the slightest impurity, and when it works in us, appeases, rejoices, vivifies and delights our heart—that is, from the two individual antagonistic forces, it is easy to be convinced that both undoubtedly exist: the Devil as the constant destroyer of men, and Christ as the constant Life-giver and Saviour. One is darkness and death; the other, Light and Life. Therefore you who love God, if you sometimes notice in your mind and heart extreme darkness, affliction, and grief, contraction and unbelief, as a force strongly opposing faith in

God, then know that the power inimical to Christ—the Devil—is within you. This is the dark and destroying power, which, having stolen into your heart through any sin, often prevents your calling upon Christ and the saints, hiding them from you behind the mist of unbelief. Wherefore? In order to torment us, because faith saves us from his snares. But it is just this which proves the existence of the opposing Sovereign power of God the Christ which the Devil keeps us from by the abomination of unbelief, and which can alone vanquish, by means of our faith, the evil force and keep it "in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."[1] Therefore it is necessary to make every effort to call upon Christ the Saviour with perfect faith. It is indispensable for every Christian to acquire the habit of turning quickly to God in prayer about everything: "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."[2] "In everything give thanks,"[3] joining your thanksgivings to praises, after the example of the angels, exclaiming, Alleluia!

The greatest gift of God, which we mostly need and which we very often obtain from God, through our prayers, is peace or rest of heart. As the Lord Himself says: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[4] Therefore, having obtained this rest, rejoice, and consider yourself as rich and possessing all things.

Let everybody remember constantly that he is God's—soul and body—and that he depends on God for all his spiritual and bodily wants every moment of his life; and therefore let him turn to God every time that he feels a want of anything (either for the soul or for the body): when, for instance, he is oppressed in body or soul—that is, when he is stricken by sorrows (spiritual sickness) or by passions (bodily sickness); also when he is threatened by the inconstancy of the elements (of fire, water, air, storm); likewise when he is about to undertake anything. Let him then remember the Author of all things, Who created everything from nothing, and Who has bestowed various powers upon His creatures, so that they may accomplish many and various works.

Every good thought presupposes the existence within us of a good and higher origin, instructing our soul in holiness. This is evident, because it seems as if everything good were somehow hidden in us, and that we endeavour in vain to introduce into our heart that which was its former inheritance. How

[1] Jude i. 6. [2] Philippians iv. 6. [3] 1 Thessalonians v. 18.
[4] St. Matthew xi. 28.

true are the words of the Apostle: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive [every good thought, all natural gifts]? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" [1]

We notice in ourselves the struggle between faith and unbelief, between the good power and the evil one; and in the world, between the spirit of the Church and the spirit of the world. There, through the spirit, you will distinguish two clearly antagonistic sides: the side of light and the side of darkness; of good and evil; the spirit of the Church and of religion, and the spirit of worldliness and unbelief. Do you know why it is so? It is owing to the struggle of two antagonistic forces: of the power of God and the power of the Devil. The Lord works in the sons who are obedient to Him, and the Devil in the sons of disobedience ("the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" [2]). And I, too, often feel within me the struggle of the same two antagonistic forces. When I stand up to pray, the evil force sometimes painfully oppresses and weighs down my heart, so that it cannot raise itself to God.

The surer and stronger are the means that unite us to God (prayer and repentance), the more destructive are the actions brought to bear against them by God's opponent and ours, who makes use of every means to attain this end: our body, so inclined to laziness; the weakness of our soul, its attachment to earthly goods and cares; doubt, so near to everyone; incredulity, unbelief; impure, evil, and blasphemous thoughts; the oppression of the heart, the darkening of the mind—all these are brought to bear against the inattentive, through the action of the enemy, in order to put a stumbling-block in the way of their prayer, on the ladder that leads us up to God. This is the reason why so few pray sincerely and heartily; this is the reason why Christians so very seldom prepare themselves for Holy Communion—so seldom confess and receive the Sacrament.

Our strength, our soul, is invisible; the soul of animals is also invisible; in plants also, their strength, their life, is invisible; the whole material world exists and is moved by an invisible power (by the laws of nature). In the higher regions there are the heavenly powers, pure and free from everything material. Everything heavenly and earthly, the highest and the lowest, lead up to a single Almighty Power, which has produced every power in heaven and on earth.

[1] 1 Corinthians iv. 7. [2] 1 Ephesians ii. 2.

Thus, let every power praise the Only One Power in Three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And let all earth-born creatures praise It, especially through the all-binding power of love, everywhere diffusing life and blessedness.

For a long time I did not clearly understand how necessary it is that our soul should be strengthened by the Holy Ghost. But now the Most Gracious Lord has granted to me to know how indispensable this is. Yes, it is necessary every moment of our life, just as breathing is; it is necessary during prayer and throughout the whole of our life. Unless He strengthens our soul, it is constantly inclined to every sin, and, therefore, to spiritual death; it becomes enfeebled, loses all power, through the evil that enters into the heart, and incapable of any good. Without the strengthening of the Holy Ghost, one feels how the heart is undermined by various evils, and is ready to sink every moment into their abyss. Then it is that our heart must stand firm as upon a rock. And this rock is—the Holy Ghost. He strengthens our powers; and when a man prays, He strengthens his heart by faith and by the hope of receiving that which he prays for. He inflames the soul with love to God; He fills the soul with bright, good thoughts, strengthening the mind and heart. If the man has any work to accomplish, He strengthens his heart by the conviction of the importance and the necessity of his labour, and by an invincible patience which overcomes all difficulties. He inspires in the man, in his intercourse with people of various positions and both sexes, a respect for the human person, who is made after God's image—whoever it may be—and is redeemed by the Blood of Christ the Lord; and makes him disregard the sometimes very unsightly outer appearance of another man's body and dress, as well as his roughness of speech and manners. It is the Holy Ghost who unites us all through love, as the children of the same Heavenly Father, and in Jesus Christ teaches us to pray: "Our Father which art in Heaven . . ."

Imagine that you see the inaccessible Light from which the light of the sun, the moon, and the stars proceeded; that you see the infinite Love which sent into the world its only-begotten Son to save the world[1] from eternal torment; that you see the Primeval Beauty from which are derived all the variety and beauty existing in the world—the variety and beauty of plants, stones, shells, fishes, birds, beasts, and all human beauty! Imagine that you see the Creator of heaven

[1] St. John iii. 16, 17.

and earth, loving, resplendent with the inaccessible light of His perfections. What will you then feel? And the Christian faith prepares us all for this vision. Observe the plants: in them are evident (1) the wonderful Wisdom, appearing in every part of the plant; (2) the Life-giving Power, strengthening and maintaining every part of the plant in its proper condition; and (3) the Omnipotence, by which the Eternal Wisdom changes the aspect of formless matter so easily, making it answer His everlasting intentions and purposes. "But Thou, Lord, art most high for evermore."[1] "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me."[2]

In the same manner as objects situated at a great distance off on the earth, though they may be large, are quite invisible from afar if the sun is not reflected in them, whilst even small ones are visible a long way off if the sun is reflected in them, so it is also amongst men: those in whom the Eternal Sun of Righteousness, God, is not reflected in His perfections, are only noticeable when quite near by a very few; but if the Sun of Righteousness is reflected in them, then they are seen by all from a very great distance, they are glorified by all; they are people of all places and of all times (the saints); some of them shine like the sun, others like the moon, and others like the stars.

Gazing upon God's creatures and seeing their infinite variety, I see myself exalted above all their multitudes by the likeness and image of God, by the understanding and by freedom, by the capability of being able to examine all of them by means of my intellect, and to wonder at the wisdom and graciousness of the Creator as manifested in them. O, how I ought to reverence my Creator! O, how I ought to honour the authors of my being—my father and my mother! They have given me existence for a time—for a time and for eternity; they have led me, in accordance with the will of God, Who created me in my mother's womb, into the magnificent palace of the world, so that in due time the Creator may admit me into the palace of heaven.

The state or any society is a body. As in the body God has put all the members together, and each one separately in their proper places, so likewise is the social body. God has set each one in his proper place, the deeds of each one being the reason of his occupying this or that particular place.

[1] Psalm xcii. 8. [2] Psalm cxxxix. 6.

Everyone sees that light is shed upon the earth from heaven, because the sun, the moon, and the stars light us from the heavenly circle. This shows that the uncreated wise Light, the Lord our God, dwells pre-eminently in the heavens; and from Him every light descends upon us, both material and spiritual—the light of the intellect and of the heart. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."[1] "God is love."[2] All thoughts, feelings, every disposition of the heart tending to destroy love and create enmity, proceed from the Devil. Let this be engraven in your heart, and hold fast in every way to love. "Follow after charity."[3] Bear in mind: that which is in opposition to the old carnal, sinful man, that do; go all your life against his will. This is the object of your life, and also your glory in Jesus Christ. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."[4] Stablish in your heart the following truth: one thing alone is worthy of all our hatred—that is, sin or vice; and towards men nourish exclusively love. The royal law is plain: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[5]

When, during prayer, your heart is overwhelmed with despondency and melancholy, be sure that these proceed from the Devil endeavouring by every means to hinder you in your prayer. Be firm, take courage, and by the remembrance of God drive away the deadly feeling. Observe: if not in your thoughts, then in your heart, the enemy often endeavours to blaspheme the name of Almighty God. What constitutes blasphemy of the heart against God? Doubt, unbelief, despondency, impatience under God's chastisements, murmuring, and all the passions. By unbelief in God's truth and mercy, the enemy utters blasphemy against the truth, mercy, and omnipotence of God; by despondency, he blasphemes God's goodness; in general, by the outburst of human passions, he blasphemes God's all-merciful providence and truth.

Establish in your mind and heart this truth: that the invisible plays the first part in the whole world, in every being; and that when the invisible leaves a certain being, the latter loses life and is destroyed: so that the visible in beings, without the invisible, forms but a mass of earth. I and all men live through an invisible first cause—God.

Men are enveloped in the darkness of ignorance of God, of themselves, and of the enemies of their salvation, who can

[1] St. John i. 9. [2] 1 John iv. 16. [3] 1 Corinthians xiv. 1.
[4] Galatians v. 24. [5] St. Matthew xxii. 39.

therefore easily rob the mental house of our soul—its mental wealth.

When it is said to the inner man: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead,"[1] the real sleep of the soul, very like the ordinary bodily sleep, is meant. Also, when it is said: "My heart, awake; why sleepest thou?" the real sleep of the heart is meant, and it is not said merely allegorically. When the body sleeps, it is weakened in every part and becomes insensible; so likewise the soul, sleeping the sleep of sin, becomes weakened in its powers, and insensible to everything that concerns faith, hope, and love. Tell it, for instance, that the Son of God came down upon earth for it and became man to save it from everlasting death; speak to it of His saving teaching, His miracles, His sufferings and death upon the Cross, His Resurrection, Ascension, and His second coming. The soul cannot understand or contain all this; it is unable to feel God's benefits, but is asleep, perfectly asleep, to faith, hope, and love. It does not fear the righteous Judge, future torments, the worm that never rests, the unquenchable fire. It sleeps—it neither hears, nor sees, nor feels. It is remarkable that bodily sleep begins with the heart; first of all the heart falls asleep, and afterwards the body. The sleeper's eyes are closed and do not see, neither do his ears hear; and it is the same with the soul that sleeps the sleep of sin. But the soul ought always to see through the eyes of the heart, even during sleep, as it is written: "I sleep, but my soul waketh."[2]

You cannot have failed to notice that all our strength lies in the heart. When the heart is light, the whole man feels at ease and happy; whilst when the heart is heavy, he feels wretched. But this relief you can only find in faith, and therefore especially in the Church, as the place where faith predominates; here God touches your hearts through His cleansing grace, and gives you His easy yoke to bear. This is a great mystery, which is worth everyone's knowing. When the heart is light, the man is ready to run and leap. This is why David "danced when he played before the ark."[3]

When you are slandered, and therefore grow disturbed and sick at heart, it shows that pride is in you, and that it must be wounded and driven out by outward dishonour. Therefore do not be irritated by derision, and do not bear

[1] Ephesians v. 14. [2] The Song of Solomon v. 2.
[3] 1 Chronicles xiii. 8; 2 Samuel vi. 14.

malice against those who hate you and slander you, but love them as your physicians, whom God has sent you to instruct you and to teach you humility, and pray to God for them. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you."[1] Say to yourself, "It is not me that they slander, but my evil passions; not me that they strike, but that viper which nestles in my heart, and smarts when anybody speaks ill of it. I will comfort myself with the thought that, perhaps, these good people will drive it from my heart by their caustic words, and my heart will then cease to ache." Therefore, thank God for outward dishonour: those who endure dishonour here will not be subjected to it in the next world. "She hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."[2] "Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us: for Thou also hast wrought all our works for us."[3]

When you pray that your sins may be forgiven, strengthen yourself always by faith, and trust in God's mercy, Who is ever ready to forgive our sins after sincere prayer, and fear lest despair should fall on your heart—that despair which declares itself by deep despondency and forced tears. What are your sins in comparison to God's mercy, whatever they be, if only you truly repent of them? But it often happens that when a man prays, he does not, in his heart, inwardly hope that his sins will be forgiven, counting them as though they were above God's mercy. Therefore, he certainly will not obtain forgiveness, even should he shed fountains of involuntary tears; and with a sorrowful, straitened heart he will depart from the Gracious God: which is only what he deserves. "Believe that ye receive them," says the Lord, "and ye shall have them."[4] Not to be sure of receiving what you ask God for, is a blasphemy against God.

When there is unbelief in anything true and sacred, the mind is generally darkened, the unbelieving heart is oppressed with fear; whilst when there is sincere faith, it experiences joy, tranquillity, breadth or expansion of life within it, so that the mind becomes bright and far-seeing. Is it not evident that truth triumphs over the heart's madness? Is not the deceitfulness of the heart manifest? Yes; the sufferings of the heart at the time of its unbelief in anything true and sacred are a sign of the truth of that in which it does not believe. The heart itself dies when it subjects the truth to doubt and attempts to destroy that which cannot be destroyed; whilst the expansion of the heart

[1] St. Matthew v. 44.
[2] Isaiah xl. 2.
[3] Isaiah xxvi. 12.
[4] St. Mark xi. 24.

when it sincerely believes is also a true sign of the truth of that in which it believes, because the object in which we believe communicates life to our heart, and renews and strengthens this life. Our heart, corrupted by sin, is but a poor receptacle of life, for sin is death and not life, and the fulness of life is outside us. But as this spiritual life is invisible, and is communicated to us according to our faith in the invisible personal life in God, therefore it is our lively sincere faith in God that brings life into our heart. Without faith, the heart must naturally feel oppression and sorrow, as the result of the curtailing and diminution of life. But, besides faith, there must also be an accord of our spiritual activity with the object of our faith, for man is a moral being.

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."[1] Who will not agree with these words of the Apostle? The carnal mind is indeed death. Draw nigh, you who are mercenary, covetous, envious, selfish, proud, ambitious, and let us look upon you, upon your actions and your life! Disclose to us, if you will, the thoughts of your heart! We shall be convinced by you—a living example—that the carnal mind is death. You do not live the true life; you are spiritually dead; you that have freedom are inwardly bound; you that have intelligence are as the foolish, because "the light that is in thee is darkness."[2] You have received from God a heart capable of delighting in everything that is true, holy, good, and beautiful; but by the carnal mind you have stifled in it all noble feelings, all noble impulses; you have become a corpse; "ye have no life in you."[3] But "to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Let any Christian man, leading the life of faith, destroying the passions within him, and thinking "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise,"[4] come to us, and tell us what he feels in his soul from the mind of the Spirit. He will say, "I feel in my heart continual peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,"[5] my heart expands, I feel an abundance of life. I mock at everything carnal; I wonder how it can have such a great power over the hearts of carnal men, and I give myself up to the continual contemplation of the heavenly, spiritual, invisible blessings prepared for those who love God."

[1] Romans viii. 6. [2] St. Matthew vi. 23. [3] St. John vi. 53.
[4] Philippians iv. 8. [5] Romans xiv. 17.

Alas! many are led astray by the gift of freedom, given by God to men, and by the possibility of being good and evil; and after having fallen into sin, men are more easily inclined to evil than to good. They blame the Creator, and say: "Why did God create us thus, and why did He not create us so that we could not fall and do evil?" Whilst others ascribe the corruption of man by sin to the imperfection of nature, setting aside God in their thoughts, and considering the whole world, with all its phenomena and objects, as something impersonal, not independent, not a free creation, of which they themselves are parts. This is what estrangement from the Church does! Into what ignorance have you sophists fallen! Meanwhile our children know clearly, exactly, and surely that which you do not know. You blame the Creator; but is He to blame if you yourself, through inattention to His voice, through your own evil nature and ingratitude, have abused the greatest gift of His goodness, great wisdom, and omnipotence—I mean the gift of freedom, which is an imprescriptible feature of God's image? Should He not be acknowledged the more merciful for having granted this gift to men, unshaken by the ingratitude of those who receive it, so that His goodness might shine upon all brighter than the sun? And has He not indeed proved His boundless love and infinite wisdom in bestowing upon us the gift of freedom, when, after our having fallen into sin, after our estrangement from Him, and our spiritual ruin, He sent into the world His only begotten Son "in an image made like to corruptible man,"[1] and gave Him to suffer and die for us? Who, after this, will blame the Creator for having given us freedom? "Let God be true, but every man a liar."[2] Work out your own salvation, each one of you; struggle, vanquish, but do not think yourself most wise; do not accuse the Creator of being unmerciful and unwise; do not blaspheme the all-merciful God. Raise yourself through love; ascend higher and higher, step by step, to spiritual perfection, which it is impossible to obtain without freedom. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."[3]

In our body, during all our lifetime, a war goes on between the principles of life and death, of good and evil, of sickness and health. The principles of death, being for a long time conquered by the principles of life (vitality), at last overpower the principles of life, because our body, being elementary and sinful, does not in itself contain any principles of life, but borrows them from the soul, which, through sin, also bears in itself many of the principles of death, and is too weak to

[1] Romans i. 23. [2] Romans iii. 4. [3] St. Matthew v. 48.

be able to resist the principles of mortality existing in the soul itself. Besides this, the inner man is renewed at the expense of the corruption of his outward parts. The vigilant, ever-active spirit, by the exertion of this very activity, finally destroys the weak frail body. Besides this, hereditary bodily diseases in course of time increase more and more, and also destroy the bodily organism. Thus the life of man on earth is a gradual daily dying. And our passions? How much of our health they too bear away! And intemperance, excesses in eating, drinking, sleeping, and pleasures? How all these impair the health! Therefore, if our body is continually wasted, and visibly approaches its end, let us despise it as transient, and care with all our strength for the immortal soul. The body is a faithless, fleeting friend.

We possess a true barometer which shows the rise and fall of our spiritual life—that is, our heart. It may also be called a compass, by means of which we are guided in our voyage over the sea of this life. It shows us whither we are going—to the spiritual east, to Christ; or to the spiritual west, the dark power that has the power of death—the Devil. Only watch this compass attentively; it will not deceive, and will show you the true way. "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God"[1]—that is, we are drawing nigh to the east.

That which a man loves, to which he turns, that he will find. If he loves earthly things, he will find earthly things, and these earthly things will abide in his heart, will communicate their earthliness to him and will find him; if he loves heavenly things, he will find heavenly things, and they will abide in his heart and give him life. We must not set our hearts upon anything earthly, for the spirit of evil is incorporated in all earthly things when we use them immoderately and in excess, this spirit having become earthly by excessive opposition to God.

When God is present in all a man's thoughts, desires, intentions, words, and works, then it means that the kingdom of God has come to him; then he sees God in everything—in the world of thought, in the world of action, and in the material world; then the omnipresence of God is most clearly revealed to him, and a genuine fear of God dwells in his heart: he seeks every moment to please God, and fears every moment lest he may sin against God, present at his right hand. "Thy kingdom come!"

Examine yourself oftener; where the eyes of your heart are looking. Are they turned towards God and the life to come,

[1] 1 John iii. 21.

towards the most peaceful, blessed, resplendent, heavenly, holy powers dwelling in heaven? Or are they turned towards the world, towards earthly blessings; to food, drink, dress, abode, to sinful vain men and their occupations? O that the eyes of our heart were always fixed upon God! But it is only in need or misfortune that we turn our eyes to the Lord, whilst in the time of prosperity our eyes are turned towards the world and its vain works. But what, you would ask, will this looking to God bring me? It will bring the deepest peace and tranquillity to your heart, light to your mind, holy zeal to your will, and deliverance from the snares of the enemy. "Mine eyes are ever looking unto the Lord," said David, and gave the reason for it: "For He shall pluck my feet out of the net."[1] "For He shall speak peace unto His people and to his saints, that they turn not again."[2]

When you doubt in the truth of any person or any event described in Holy Scripture, then remember that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,"[3] as the Apostle says, and is therefore true, and does not contain any imaginary persons, fables, and tales, although it includes parables which everyone can see are not true narratives, but are written in figurative language. The whole of the Word of God is single, entire, indivisible truth; and if you admit that any narrative, sentence, or word is untrue, then you sin against the truth of the whole of Holy Scripture and its primordial Truth, which is God Himself. "I am the truth,"[4] said the Lord; "Thy word is truth,"[5] said Jesus Christ to God the Father. Thus, consider the whole of the Holy Scripture as truth; everything that is said in it has either taken place or takes place.

Do not give way to the dark evil inclinations in your heart against your neighbour, but conquer them and uproot them by the power of faith, by the light of a sound mind, and you will become kind and gentle. "I have walked innocently."[6] Such inclinations frequently arise in the depths of the heart. He who has not learned to subdue them will be often gloomy, melancholy, a burden to himself and to others. When they come to you, force yourself to be cordially disposed; to mirth and innocent jests; and the evil inclinations will be dispersed like smoke. This is from experience.

It is a strange phenomenon in our nature, perverted by sin, to hate those to whom we do good, and to make them pay for our benefits by disliking them! Oh, how narrow and poor in love and

[1] Psalm xxv. 14. [2] Psalm lxxxv. 8. [3] 2 Timothy iii. 16.
[4] St. John xiv. 6. [5] St. John xvii. 17. [6] Psalm xxv. 1.

grace is our heart! How selfish it is! The enemy may well mock at us; he wishes to destroy the fruits of our good works. But the more good you do to others, the more you must love them, knowing that those who receive your benefits serve as a pledge to you of your receiving forgiveness from God.

In asking anything of the Lord, or of His Most-pure Mother, or of the Angels and Saints, it is needful to have such faith as the centurion of Capernaum had.[1] He believed that in the same manner as his soldiers obeyed him and fulfilled his words, so much more, at the Almighty Word of the All-merciful God, his request would be fulfilled. If creatures with their limited powers fulfilled that which He asked them to do, then will not the Master Himself through His Almighty power fulfil the requests of His servants who turn to Him with faith and hope? Will not the Most-pure Mother of God, the Angels and Saints, His true servants mighty through grace and in intercession with God, also fulfil our requests offered with faith, hope, and love? They will indeed; and I believe, with the centurion, that if I pray as I ought, and for what I ought, to any Saint: Grant me this, he will grant it to me; Come to my help, he will come; Do this, and he will do it. This is the simple, firm faith that we must have!

Every lying thought bears in itself a proof of its falsehood. This proof is its deadly effect upon the heart; "for to be carnally minded is death."[2] Likewise every true thought contains in itself a proof of its truth. This proof is its vivifying effect upon the heart; "but to be spiritually minded is life and peace,"[3] says the Apostle.

"Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul: that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."[4] It was thus with the Mother of the Lord in the full sense of the words; it is also thus with other good and God-fearing persons, and their souls also are pierced with a sword in order that the thoughts of the hearts of those who come in contact with them may be disclosed; that is, sometimes God places them in such relations with other people in whose souls much hidden evil lies concealed, that they involuntarily speak out from the abundance of the evil within them, and it flows from their lips like a foul stream or like a whole river. Then they begin to do deeds unworthy of the name of man, and it is only after this that others learn what these persons were inwardly who were previously considered wise, learned, and estimable (the scribes and pharisees—both of old and of the present time).

[1] St. Luke vii. 6 and following verses.
[2] Romans viii. 6.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] St. Luke ii. 35.

"Thy kingdom come;" that is, the kingdom of life, for at present the kingdom of death continues for the greater part under the dominion of him who has the power of death—the Devil. How can the kingdom of God come to a man during his present life? Through hearty repentance. "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." [1] Let the impious man then give up his godless opinions, the mercenary his love of money, the deceiver his deceitfulness, the drunkard his drinking, the glutton his gluttony, the dissolute his dissipation, the proud his pride, the vain his vanity, the envious, the insatiable, his envy and his insatiableness, the impatient and murmurer his impatience and murmuring, and let everyone learn to do the acts of Christian love, and especially "to bear the infirmities of the weak." [2]

Outward prayer is often performed at the expense of inward prayer, and inward at the expense of outward; that is, when I pray with my lips or read, then many words do not penetrate into the heart, I become double minded and hypocritical; with my lips I say one thing, whilst in my heart I feel another. The lips speak truth, whilst the disposition of the heart does not agree with the words of the prayer. But if I pray inwardly, heartily, then, without paying attention to the pronunciation of the words, I concentrate it upon their contents, their power, gradually accustoming my heart to the truth, and thus entering into the same disposition of spirit in which the words of the prayer were written. In this way I accustom myself, little by little, to pray in spirit and truth in accordance with the words of the Eternal Truth: "They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." [3] When a man prays outwardly aloud, then he cannot always follow all the movements of his heart, which are so rapid that he is necessarily obliged to pay attention to the pronunciation of the words, and to their outward form. Thus the prayers of many of the clergy who read rapidly become quite untrue: with their lips they seem to pray; in appearance they are pious, but their hearts are asleep, and do not know what their lips say. This proceeds from the fact that they hurry, and do not meditate in their hearts upon what they are saying. We must pray for them, as they pray for us; we must pray that their words may penetrate into their hearts and breathe warmth into them. They pray for us in the words of holy persons, and we must pray for them also.

We sin in thought, word, and deed. In order to become pure images of the Most Holy Trinity, we must strive that our

[1] St. Matthew iii. 2. [2] Romans xv. 1. [3] St. John iv. 24.

thoughts, words, and deeds may be holy. Thought corresponds, in God, to the Father, the word to the Son, and the deed to the all-accomplishing Holy Ghost. The sins of thought are not an unimportant matter for the Christian, because all that is pleasing to God in us is comprised, according to Saint Macarius of Egypt, in thoughts, for the thoughts are the beginning from which words and deeds proceed: words, because they either benefit those who hear them or are corrupt and tempt others, perverting their hearts and thoughts; and deeds, still more, because examples act more powerfully than anything upon people, inciting them to imitate them.

Your Lord is love: love Him and in Him all men, as His children in Christ. Your Lord is a fire: do not let your heart be cold, but burn with faith and love. Your Lord is light: do not walk in darkness and do not do anything in darkness of mind, without reasoning or understanding, or without faith. Your Lord is a God of mercy and bountifulness: be also a source of mercy and bountifulness to your neighbours. If you will be such, you will find salvation yourself with everlasting glory.

He who says prayers hurriedly, without hearty understanding and feeling, being conquered by his slothful, sleepy flesh, does not serve God, but serves his own flesh, his self-love, and reviles God by his inattention and the indifference of his heart to prayer: "God is a spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth"[1]—not hypocritically. However slothful and weak your flesh may be, however inclined to sleep you may be, conquer yourself; do not spare yourself for God; renounce yourself; let your gift to God be perfect; give God your heart.

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge."[2] This silent but evident declaration of the heavens of their creation by the Almighty has reached even us, and there is no language or dialect in which this declaration is not understood. And now, since the time of the Incarnation of the Son of God, all the glory of God, the glory of His love towards mankind, as well as the glory of creation, is declared unto us by the Gospel and the Holy Church; by the voices of the preachers of the Gospel; by those who celebrate the Sacraments and prayers; that is, the priests, readers, and singers; by the sound of bells, not excluding also the preaching of the heavens with their luminaries. But the preaching of the living

[1] St. John iv. 24. [2] Psalm xix. 1, 2.

voice is more lively, more intelligible and striking. The glory of the Lord is declared by all the earth, and by all earthly beings.

In all your works, either at home or at the place of your service, do not forget that all your strength, your light and your success are in Christ and His Cross; therefore, do not fail to call upon the Lord before beginning any work, saying: Jesus, help me! Jesus, enlighten me! Thus your heart will be supported and warmed by lively faith and hope in Christ, for His is the power and glory unto ages of ages.

Take care; do not forget, Christian; never lose hearty faith in Him Who is your invisible Life, your Peace, your Light, your Strength, your Breath; that is, in Jesus Christ. Do not believe your heart when it becomes gross, darkened, unbelieving, and cold from plenteousness of food and drink, from worldly distractions, or finally when you live by the intellect, and not by the heart; that is, when you exercise the intellect and neglect the heart, or, when you enlarge and adorn the net, leaving the fisherman himself in poverty and need; for the heart, comparatively speaking, is the hunter or fisherman whilst the intellect is the fisherman's net.

In times of rest, ease, and gratification of the flesh, the latter revives with all its passions and inclinations, whilst in times of oppression, vexation, and weariness, it is subdued with all its passions; this is why, in His wisdom and mercy, the Heavenly Father subjects our soul and body to grievous afflictions and sicknesses, and this is why we must not only patiently endure these afflictions and sicknesses, but must rejoice in them, even more than in a state of spiritual calm, ease, and bodily health, for the spiritual condition of the man who is not subjected to spiritual afflictions or bodily sicknesses must undoubtedly be bad, especially during an abundance of earthly blessings; his heart imperceptibly generates all kinds of sins and passions, and exposes him to spiritual death.

Remember that the Lord is in every Christian. When your neighbour comes to you, always have great respect for him, because the Lord is in him, and often expresses his will through him. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."[1] Therefore, do not grudge anything to your brother, but do unto him as unto the Lord; especially as you do not know in whom the Lord will come and visit you; be impartial to all, be kind to all, sincere and

[1] Philippians ii. 13.

hospitable. Remember that sometimes God speaks even through unbelievers, or disposes their hearts towards us, as it happened in Egypt when the Lord gave Joseph favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.[1]

My heart finds its peace in the highest, in spiritual things and not in earthly and material ones. Grant, Lord, that I may ever meditate on the highest, and entirely renounce earthly wisdom. My trust is in Thy goodness! "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help."[2]

As the word of the man reveals what is in his mind and heart (reveals the mind—unseen, dominating, and creating), and as the breath proceeds from the man through the word, revealing the mind or the thought, so, somewhat similarly, the Word of God reveals to us the Father—that great all-creating Mind—and, through the Word, the Holy Ghost, the life-giving Spirit, Which is the power of the Highest, eternally proceeds from the Father and is revealed to men. "The power of the Highest shall overshadow Thee."[3] Now the words of the Saviour are comprehensible: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."[4] That is, only the Son reveals the Father unto men, as our word reveals our thought hidden in the soul. Such is the closeness of the union between the Father and the Son! And every Person has Its particular dominion and Its own, so to say, work. And, therefore, the Lord said to his disciples: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you."[5] Glory to Thee, Son of God, Who hath revealed unto us the Mystery of the Most Holy Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost! Thy Word is truth; we live by all and each separate word of Thine. They are our sweetness, peace, and life; especially the words concerning the Comforter.

Strengthen yourself by the undoubting invocation of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. He is well known to you. You so often invoke Him upon the Holy Gifts, and He, at your prayer, unfailingly and continually transubstantiates them, and you yourself partake again and again of the fruits of His divine acts.

You must preserve with the greatest care in your frail vessel, in your heart, the treasure of the Spirit, "the rivers

[1] Genesis xxxix. 21. [2] Psalm cxxi. 1. [3] St. Luke i. 35.
[4] St. Matthew xi. 27. [5] St. John xvi. 7.

of living water in your belly";[1] you must watch your heart, must be kind, and refrain from irritability and movements of self-love, from attachments to earthly things, and from impure risings of the flesh; otherwise, the priceless treasure of the Spirit will immediately leave you, peace and joy will vanish from your heart together with that feeling of the extraordinary, angelic, spiritual lightness of the soul, soaring free; the rivers of living water, which only until then flowed and abundantly supplied the furrows of the soul, will also vanish, the soul will be filled with a strange fire, cruelly burning it within, depriving it of peace and joy, filling it with affliction and oppression, and inciting it to irritability and blasphemy. So manifest, so sharply defined is the change within us of the kingdom of God into the kingdom of the enemy, the kingdom of life into the kingdom of death! The Christian sees this with his inward eyes, and marvels at the truth and holiness of God; marvels also at the watchfulness of the enemy, who ever, "as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour."[2]

God the Father is—life, God the Son is—life, God the Holy Ghost is—life: The Holy Trinity is—life. Life is in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; if you deny in your heart the Father, you deny the life of your heart; if you deny the Son, you deny your life; if you deny the Holy Ghost, you also deny your life. So that your doubt will bring spiritual death into your heart, sorrow and painful oppression, whilst God will remain the God of life in three Persons; if you cast away doubt from your heart, and acknowledge with your whole heart all the Three Persons as your God, as your life, then life will again enter into your heart.

Whilst reading or listening to sacred works, honour heartily in those who wrote them the image of God the Word, or God the Word Himself, speaking through them. Remember always, whilst reading books of spiritual or worldly contents, that man is God's image and that this image of God is in the thought, word, and spirit through which he speaks. Accustom yourself always to look upon every man with deep respect, as upon the image of God, but especially when he speaks, and above all when he speaks of God. Oh, how divine he is then! From being accustomed to men, from being acquainted with them, with their everyday life, from being accustomed to the gift of speech in ourselves and in others, we set little value upon

[1] St. John vii. 38. [2] Peter v. 8.

this gift, we even sometimes despise it in others; and thus the devil, through our self-love and inattention, blasphemes the image of God in men. We must by every means humble our hearts and subdue our proud intellect, lest we should be like the contemporaries of the prophets, who looked on them only as sweet-voiced singers, and nothing more; they did not wish to fulfil their commands, they even despised, persecuted, beat, and killed them; lest we should be like those, by whom "no prophet is accepted in his own country."[1] However insignificant and unimportant the man may be, honour in him the image of God, especially when he speaks with love, and, above all, when he speaks of and does the works of love.

16/9/06

Let us suppose that you have written a book about the Holy Trinity, and have printed a thousand copies of it, or, perhaps, as many as you liked. And in all these copies of your book there is not only the same spirit, but also the same words, and they all have the same form. It is thus with the offering of the Body of Christ. It is offered throughout the universe in an innumerable multitude of churches. The same Trinity acts on all Christian altars; in every lamb[2] there is the one same Christ and His Spirit, as the contents are in the book. Everywhere the offering has the one same form, and thus this most holy mystery is like a single great sacred book of the Lord's love to mankind, prepared in innumerable quantities throughout the universe under the one same form and with the one same spirit living in it, in Whom love abounds, and Who took upon Himself the sins of the world—that is, the Spirit of Christ. Here is another similarity. There are multitudes of individual human beings upon the earth; they all have the same bodily shape, the same soul, with similar, though not identical, capabilities; and all these beings have one name—that of man. All men are similar to each other, and have sprung from the same origin, primarily from God the Father, the Son, and His Spirit, and afterwards from one pair. This is why, amongst other things, God's law commands us to love everyone as ourself, because of the identity of our nature. Thus, you see many persons, and they are one by the identity of the nature of their soul and body. Likewise the Lord, in His life-giving Mysteries—wherever they are offered—is eternally the sole, indivisible, Creator, "and hath made of one blood all nations of men."[3] Through His one Spirit, living in the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood, celebrated in all the

[1] St. Luke iv. 24.

[2] The bread prepared for Sacrament is called "The Lamb" in the Orthodox Eastern Church (Isaiah liii. 7).

[3] Acts xvii. 26.

churches of the world, He wishes to unite us to Himself—we who have fallen from union with Him through sin and obedience to the Devil—and to cut off and cleanse that which in all of us prevents union with Him and with each other, "that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us."[1] Such is the object of the mystery of the Communion.

Why is it wonderful that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, and that Christ rests in them as the soul rests in the body? Why is it wonderful when the Devil nestles in a tiny germ (in the heart) of the infant, and grows stronger with the growth of the body, so that afterwards the infant is born with the Devil already concealed and nestling in its heart? O, what infinite goodness and wisdom the Lord has shown by giving us the most pure Mysteries of His Body and Blood, and by the fact that they are received by Christians into their very hearts—that is, there where the Devil nestles, having the power of sin and "the power of death"[2]—as a perfect antidote to bestow upon us life and holiness, and to drive away sin and death! Just as undoubtedly as the Devil and every sin often nestles in our hearts, so undoubtedly does Christ, the life-giver, our sanctification, dwell in our hearts. Our Lord is mightier than the Devil. If the Devil still lives and works in our hearts through our attachments to earthly things, then how shall not Christ enter into our heart, through faith and repentance, when it was created to be the temple of God? How shall not Christ enter into our heart precisely in His Blood and Flesh, corresponding with our spirituality and our fleshliness? Also, if the Devil can give life and speech to the image of the beast,[3] then cannot Christ dwell in the bread and wine, transforming them, and completely assimilating them to Himself as His Flesh and Blood?

A burning-glass only sets fire to wood, paper, or any other combustible material when we place it in such a position that the rays of the sun, concentrated in the focus of the glass, being all concentrated upon one point of the object, will act upon it through their entire combined power, and thus direct on the object, as it were, the whole sun on a small scale. It is thus also during prayer, when our souls are warmed, vivified, and inflamed by the wise sun—God, when through our intellect, acting like the burning-glass, we direct upon our heart, as the spiritual point of our being, the mental Sun, and when it acts upon the heart with all its singleness and power. Likewise in regard to the Mother of God, the angels, and the saints. Fix

[1] St. John xvii. 21. [2] Hebrews ii. 14. [3] Revelations xiii. 15.

upon your heart their images as they are, with all their power and sanctity; let your heart receive enlightenment from them with all possible fulness and power, and become inflamed by the abundance of their love as by the action of fire—their holiness, purity, goodness, and strength will be communicated to your heart; it will itself be cleansed, itself be strengthened in faith and love; and the more resolutely, the more constantly, your heart is turned towards God and His saints the more it will be enlightened, purified, and vivified.

If you invoke any saint doubting that he is near you and hears you, and your heart is oppressed and contracted, conquer yourself, or, rather, overcome, with the help of the Lord Jesus Christ, the calumniator (the Devil) nestling in your heart; call upon the saint with the hearty assurance that he is near you in the Holy Ghost and hears your prayer, and you will at once feel relieved. Oppression and weariness of heart during prayer proceed from want of sincerity, from the deceitfulness and craftiness of our heart, in the same manner as when, during ordinary conversation with other people, we feel inwardly ill at ease if we do not speak to them from the heart, but untruthfully, insincerely. "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."[1] Be true in heart always and everywhere, and you will always and everywhere have peace, but especially be true in your converse with God and the saints, "because the spirit is truth."[2]

When praying, we must pronounce each word from the heart with the same power that is contained in each one of them, just as medicines are usually taken with a curative power corresponding to each of them, and bestowed upon them by the Creator. If we leave out the power or the essence of the medicine then it will not take effect, but will only set our teeth on edge; likewise, if during prayer we pronounce the words, disregarding their power, without feeling in our heart their truth, we shall not derive any benefit from the prayer, because true, fruitful prayer must be in spirit and in truth. The words of the prayer correspond to the component parts and the different ingredients of the medicine, each of them having its own power and forming together a curative dose for the body. In the same way as chemists preserve the power of the aromatic medicinal ingredients, keeping them firmly stoppered in glass or other vessels, so we must firmly preserve the power of each word in our heart as in a vessel, and not pronounce it otherwise than with a power corresponding to it.

[1] Acts xxvi. 14. [2] 1 John v. 7.

When praying, we must represent to ourselves the whole of creation as nothing before God, and God alone as everything, containing everything as a drop of water, existing, moving in everything, and vivifying everything.

Prayer is a golden link connecting the Christian man, the wanderer and the stranger upon earth, with the spiritual world of which he is a member, and, above all, with God the Source of life. The soul came forth from God, and to God may it ever ascend through prayer. There is great benefit from prayer to those who pray: it gives rest to the soul and the body; it gives rest not only to the soul of him who prays ("I will give you rest")[1] but also to the souls of our departed forefathers, to our fathers and brothers. See how important prayer is!

As smoke from burning wood ascends in the air, so also the soul ascends from the body given over to the burning of corruption.

23/9/98

Conscience in men is nothing else but the voice of the omnipresent God moving in the hearts of men, as He Who alone Is and has created everything, the Lord, knows all as Himself—all the thoughts, desires, intentions, words, and works of men, present, past, and future. However far in front I may let my thoughts, my imagination run, He is there before me and I ever inevitably finish my course in Him, ever having Him as the witness of my ways. "His eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men."[2] "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?"[3]

Here before us is a living man. His eyes are fixed upon us, his ears are open to hear; his soul and body are before us, but we see the body and not the soul: we do not see his thoughts, his desires, his intentions, although there is not an instant during which his soul does not think and live in a corresponding manner. So also before us, around us, and within us is visible nature, all God's beautiful world; in it we see everywhere life, harmoninous order, action, but we do not see the Author of life and order, we do not see the Great Architect Himself, although meanwhile he is present at every moment in every place, as the soul in the body, though He is not limited by it; there is not a fraction of a moment during which He, as the All-perfect, Most-wise, All-merciful, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Almighty Spirit, does not think, does not shower

[1] St. Matt. xi. 28. [2] Jeremiah xxxii. 19. [3] Psalm cxxxix. 7.

benefits and wisdom upon His creatures. There is not a fraction of a moment during which He does not apply His wisdom and omnipotence, for God is a Self-acting Being, infinitely productive. Thus you look upon the world, but look upon it and observe everywhere in it its Author—God, everywhere present in it, filling everything, moving in everything, and ordering everything.

The conscience of every man is a ray of light from the one all-enlightening spiritual Sun—God. Through the conscience God rules over all, as a righteous and Almighty King. And how mighty is His empire through the conscience! Nobody is strong enough to completely silence its voice! It speaks impartially to all and to each, as the voice of God Himself! Through the conscience we are all as one man before God. This is why it seems as if the Ten Commandments referred to one man:—"I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other gods . . . . ; thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image ; thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain . . . . Remember the Sabbath Day . . . . Honour thy father and thy mother ; thou shalt not kill ; thou shalt not commit adultery ; thou shall not steal ; thou shalt not bear false witness ; thou shalt not covet ;"[1] or, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" . . . . and "thy neighbour as thyself,"[2] because "he" is exactly the same as "I."

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."[3] This is a great commandment! It is absolutely necessary to fulfil it. "To keep the unity of the Spirit." This the Son of God ever desired, and still desires. For this He prayed, and still prays, to His Father. "Holy Father! keep through Thine own name," prayed the Lord for His disciples, "those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as We are. . . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word: that they all may be one ; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."[4] You see, therefore, that our unity through the Spirit, through life, loudly proves also the Divinity of the Founder of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ. He, who wishes to unite all, to make all as one soul, and does so, came forth from the One God, Who created all things, Who has united all things under Him, and Who wishes to raise even those who have separated themselves from union by disobedience, to union with Him through faith and obedience. The teachers who have not come from God, who were not called of Him, not sent by Him ("I

[1] Exodus xx. 1–17.
[2] St. Mark xii. 30, 31.
[3] Ephesians iv. 3.
[4] St. John xvii. 11, 20, 21.

have not sent these prophets, yet they ran"[1]; "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron"[2]), usually bring into the company of men disunion, diversity of opinion, and thus clearly prove that they are not of God. Such was Luther, such are other teachers of dissent, such are all heretics. They have divided the one Church of God, have cut into parts the indivisible, the united plurality, united under the one Head of the Church—Christ, animated by the one Spirit of God, and have thus proved that they were instruments of the Devil, who strives in every way to divide, scatter, and disperse the Lord's sheep. "The wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep."[3] Glory to the Christian Orthodox faith! Its true fruit ever was, and is, the unity of the faithful between themselves through love and the community of spiritual and material blessings. The farther Christians remove themselves from the spirit of their faith, the more they become divided by self-love; the more they are absorbed in themselves, the lesser community they have in spiritual and material blessings—especially of material ones with those in want—love becomes exhausted in them, and mankind more distressed. True Christianity brings felicity even upon earth, for it looks upon Christians as one great body, whose members are honourable and dishonourable, not by birth, but by their calling and deeds, strong and weak, rich and poor, and the Spirit of God intercedes in the souls of the rich or strong on behalf of the poor and needy—through the community of spiritual and material blessings. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul."[4] (It is to the honour of Russia that, in the time of the famine, she rendered unanimous succour to those suffering from the bad harvest.)

Dislike, enmity, or hatred should be unknown amongst Christians even by name. How can dislike exist amongst Christians? Everywhere you see love, everywhere you breathe the fragrance of love. Our God is the God of love. His kingdom is the kingdom of love. From love to us He did not spare His only-begotten Son, but delivered Him up to die for our sakes, "to be the propitiation for our sins."[5] In your home you see love in those around, for they are sealed in baptism and chrism with the cross of love, and wear the cross; they also partake with you in church of the "supper of love."[6] In church there are everywhere symbols of love: crosses, the sign of the cross, the saints who were pleasing to God by their love to Him and to their neighbour, and Incarnate

[1] Jeremiah xxiii. 21. [2] Hebrews v. 4. [3] St. John x. 12.
[4] Acts iv. 32. [5] 1 John iv. 9.
[6] The Lord's Supper is thus called in the Russian Church.

Love Itself. In heaven and upon earth everywhere there is love. It rests and rejoices the heart, like God, whilst enmity kills the soul and the body. And you must show love, always and everywhere. How can you not love when everywhere you hear love preached, when only the destroyer of mankind, the devil, is eternal enmity!

"He that spared not His own Son . . . how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things."[1] The essential, the greatest is given; everything else that we ask or pray for is infinitely less than the Son of God. We may therefore ask God for everything trustfully in the name of Jesus Christ, every blessing or gift that we can think of, for "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."[2] Do you pray for the forgiveness of the sins or for the repose of the souls of the departed? "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world."[3] "The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."[4] He can forgive even the departed every sin committed by them in word, deed, or thought. "He is the resurrection, the life and the repose of His departed servants" . . . Would you ask anything of Him for the living and for yourself? "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."[5]

As the number of stars in heaven is known to the Lord, so the number of the angels of heaven and the number of their thoughts are known to Him; as the number of the grains of the sand of the sea, and of the creatures of the whole earth, with their organs and component parts, both great and infinitely small, are known to Him; as the number of atoms of all elements, small unto infinite infinity, is known to Him, so the number of the whole human race, which was, which is, and which shall be, is known to Him, as well as the number of all the thoughts of those who were, who are, and who will be, and the number of movements of their hearts, of their words and deeds. As in material nature nothing is concealed from Him, not the smallest atom is lost—for how can that which was created by God be destroyed without Him, without His will—so likewise in spiritual nature, not a single thought, not a single idea, not a single movement of the heart, desire or deed are lost for Him—all are counted up in their treasuries in their right number and measure; that is, in the quantity, degree, and power that they really were, excepting the evil thoughts, desires, words, and acts confessed or expiated by amendment of life. The number of all the atoms of the earth and of the atoms of earthly creatures, as well as the number of thoughts and movements of

[1] Romans viii. 32. [2] St. John xiv. 13. [3] 1 John ii. 2.
[4] 1 John i. 7. St. John xv. 7.

the human spirit, are in this respect completely parallel. Indeed, if that which is created, subordinate, and dead is not destroyed of itself, then how can that be destroyed which has itself received from God the capability of creating, and which is dominating, living? I mean thought, clothing itself in words, and the very author of thought, the soul. And thus, as this is impossible, prepare yourselves, mortals, to answer at the judgment for all your thoughts, desires, words, for all your deeds, good and evil, which await you there, and which were sent there beforehand by you from earth—the good and the evil, unconfessed or not expiated by opposite thoughts, desires and deeds. For all these God will bring you to judgment. Most Merciful Lord! "Enter not into judgment with Thy servants."[1] "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"[2]

As the greatest luminary is reflected in infinitely small earthly bodies, in their innumerable multitudes, and man's image is reflected in the small pupils of the eyes, so the spiritual Sun, Christ, is represented in small beings, in men, in their infinite multitudes, also in the smallest particles of His Body and Blood, because the First—Life Eternal—is most simple and individual. As the sun, being reflected in a multitude of great and small bodies, lights the whole world, covering it all; so it is with the Lord.

The one same wind, but in an innumerable multitude of places, creates diverse powers: so the one same Spirit of God, but in innumerable assemblies of angels, manifests His power and strength, and in all holy men "bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof."[3]

"The Lord keeps" not only "all the bones,"[4] but also the images of the saints, not allowing them to perish through corruption, through carelessness and neglect, but miraculously recovering them, as we know from descriptions of the appearances of thaumaturgical icons, especially of that of the most pure Mother of God—our Lady. So dear to God is the image of man, especially that of a holy man, as a vessel of grace. Through such images He works miracles and bestows invisible powers of healing and consolation.

"God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."[5] Through our spiritual vision we see and know the smallest movements of the heart, all our thoughts, desires and intentions in general, almost everything that is in our soul. But God is

[1] Psalm cxliii. 2. [2] Psalm cxxx. 3. [3] St. John iii. 8.
[4] Psalm xxxiv. 20. [5] 1 John iii. 20.

greater than our heart. He is within us and around us and everywhere, in every place, as the Single, All-seeing, Spiritual Eye, of which our own spiritual vision is but a small specimen, and, therefore, He knows all that is in us a thousand times better and more clearly than we ourselves; at the same time he knows everything that is in every man, in every angel, and in all the heavenly powers, in every animate and inanimate creature; sees as upon the palm of His hand all that is within us and every creature, being inherent in each one of them, and maintaining each one of them in its existence and functions, as the All-Provident Creator.

As in Jesus Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,"[1] so likewise in the life-giving Sacrament of His Body and Blood. In the small human body dwelleth all the fulness of the infinite, uncontainable Godhead, and in the small lamb, or bread, in each smallest particle, dwelleth all divine fulness. Glory to Thy Omnipotence and Goodness, O Lord! 31/12/98

As the sun, though it is itself always in the heavens, but by its rays, as if by innumerable hands, reaches the earth and its entire surface, and communicates itself to all organic bodies, entering into them (the sun enters into bodies by its rays), warming them, giving them life and growth through its warmth, passing through transparent ones, or reflecting in them by its whole circle (there are as many images of the sun as there are transparent bodies), and warming the opaque, solid, and inorganic bodies—so the spiritual Sun, God, although Himself pre-eminently in the heavens, but by His Life-giving Spirit, as though by His rays, communicates Himself to all reasonable creatures, angels and men, penetrating into their spiritual being, sanctifying them, giving them life, strength, and growth, in the same manner as the rays of the sun penetrate into organic and vegetable bodies, giving them life and growth. As the sun, though it is itself in the heavens, lights the whole earth, communicating life to every creature and thing, however insignificant, so likewise the Lord, by the Light of the Trinity, enlightens all men, for He is the true Light, "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."[2]

All you who draw near to serve God in prayer, learn to be like Him, meek, humble, and true of heart; do not let there be any deceitfulness or duplicity nor coldness in your soul. Strive to have His Spirit, for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."[3] The Lord seeks in us that which is like and akin to Himself, on to which His grace may be grafted. Remember that not a single word is lost during prayer, if you say

[1] Colossians ii. 9. [2] St. John i. 9. [3] Romans viii. 9.

it from your heart; God hears each word, and weighs it in a balance. Sometimes it seems to us that our words only strike the air in vain, and sound as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. No, no; it is not so! We must remember that God understands us when we pray, that is, our words, just as those who pray perfectly understand the words themselves, for man is God's image. The Lord responds to every desire of the heart, expressed in words or unexpressed.

In communicating with undoubting faith of the Life-giving Sacrament, I am instructed in a sensible manner of the Omnipresence of Christ. In what manner? Because in every particle of the Body and in each drop of the Blood I receive Christ wholly, and thus, through my spiritual vision, I see that He is at the same time wholly in all the particles and drops, whatever their number may be unto infinity. Exactly in the same manner, the Lord is wholly in every temple; and as orthodox temples are to be found upon the whole earth, so the Lord is present upon the whole earth, not only through His Godhead, but both in His Body and Soul; everywhere, wholly and indivisibly, communicating Himself to believers, and bringing forth sweet fruits in them: the purifying of sins, the sanctification of Christian souls and bodies, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, uniting all to Himself, to the Father and the Holy Ghost. We also know that through fervent prayer He enters into the souls of believers with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Being inherent in the whole material world, and vivifying the whole of it together, and each part of it separately, the Lord is still more inherent in men, and especially in Christians, and lives in them: "Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"[1] "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?"[2]

The human race is one great tree of God, spreading and growing over the whole earth, and covering the whole earth with its branches. To the original rotten root—fallen Adam—God in His great wisdom and mercy has grafted a new living root—the Lord Jesus Christ—from whom Christians derive their origin, as a shoot from the whole tree. In trees there is organic earthly life; in the Christian race the life of Christ, heavenly, spiritual; and we must look upon the spiritual capabilities and powers of true Christians as upon the powers of Jesus Christ Himself. "We have the mind of Christ,"[3] said the Apostle of true Christians; we must also look upon good works as upon the fruits of the grace of Christ. Christians leading an un-Christianlike life are

[1] 2 Corinthians xvi. 5. [2] 1 Corinthians vi. 19. [3] 1 Corinthians ii. 16.

the dry branches on the shoots coming from the root—Christ; and "every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away . . . and cast them into the fire."[1] Heathens are the unregenerate, inanimate shoot coming from the rotten root—Adam. By faith they also may be grafted on to the living, healthy shoot, to the body of the Church—that is, to the Body of Christ.

Whose are the leaves of the tree? They are God's. Whose are the good thoughts in you? They are God's. Whose is the capacity in the trees to grow and form their tissues, and to produce and develop leaves and fruit? It is God's—that is, given by God. Whose is your capacity of thought and word? It is God's. Do the trees wrongfully use the powers given to them by God? No. Do men wrongfully use the capacities and powers bestowed upon them by God? They do. They misuse them through their intellect, received from God for the purpose of knowing God and His truths; they misuse them through their heart, created for the purpose of loving God and their neighbours, of experiencing the blessedness of communion with God; and they misuse them through free will, given to them for the purpose of endless improvement in virtue.

God works in our body, in its natural function, supporting it, feeding it, and rearing it. He also acts in the grass, or in the trees, or in the animals, clothing the grass,[2] rearing the tree and adorning it with leaves and fruit, feeding the animals and rearing their bodies. Of ourselves, we cannot do or create anything in our body, not one jot, as it is said, "Thou canst not make one hair white or black."[3] God is equally in the infinitely great and in the infinitely small, not being limited either by the one or the other, but is wholly present in everything, being indivisible and above all.

Could the leaves exist without the tree, and could the tree itself exist without earth, air, water, and warmth? Likewise no soul can exist without God, without His Son, without His Spirit. God is my being, my breath, my light, my strength, my drink, my food. He carries me as a mother carries her infant in her arms. More than this. Carrying me, my soul and body, He dwells in me, and is united to me.

When praying to God, remember that God is Three Persons; and as He is a Person and Persons, He possesses in infinity all those perfections which we can imagine in any

[1] St. John xv. 2, 6. [2] St. Luke xii. 28. [3] St. Matthew v. 36.

most perfect man, by the grace of God—as, for instance, in the most pure Virgin Mary, in Saint Nicholas the Wonder-Worker, in Saint John Chrysostom, in the apostles, prophets. Filled with the Spirit of God, man is God's image and the likeness of God. From a perfect image, we can partly judge what the Prototype is like. All that is best, that attracts our spiritual gaze and the inclinations of our heart in man, is from God, from His Son, and from His Spirit. For instance, Saint Nicholas was, and still is, compassionate and merciful to men, by the grace of God. He always was, and still is, ready to hear those who call upon him sincerely, through the same merciful heart which he had during his lifetime, and which he still possesses, by the grace of God. Now, is not the Lord Himself compassionate and merciful, and much more compassionate and merciful? Infinitely more, as He Himself is infinitely greater than Saint Nicholas. Or let us take the Apostle Paul. What bowels of compassion there were in the apostle! Writing of the servant of Philemon, he said to his master: "Therefore receive him: that is, mine own bowels."[1] How much love is contained in these words! And what love all his epistles breathe! "Our heart is enlarged," wrote he to the Corinthians. "Ye are not straitened in us."[2] He has also described in one of his epistles in what Divine love consists. In reading this description, one feels that the apostle himself had indeed fulfilled all that he wrote concerning love. But whence came this love in the apostle who had previously persecuted and grieved Christ, and who, entering the houses of His disciples, dragged out men and women, bound them, and shut up many mercilessly in prison?[3] From the Lord, the Source of love. He alone is eternal, boundless Love, embracing all creatures.

As the Holy Trinity, our God is One Being, although Three Persons, so, likewise, we ourselves must be one. As our God is indivisible, we also must be indivisible, as though we were one man, one mind, one will, one heart, one goodness, without the smallest admixture of malice—in a word, one pure love, as God is Love. "That they may be one, even as We are One."[4]

All men, as well as the angels of God, are the breath of God. This is why the angels are called spirits—or, which is the same, the breath of God—whilst the spirits of men are called souls, because they proceeded from the Divine breath, and breathe through God. In the first Antiphon it is said:

[1] Philemon i. 12. [2] 2 Corinthians vi. 11, 12.
[3] Acts ix. 1, 2; xxii. 5; xxvi. 10, 11. [4] St. John xvii. 22.

"Every soul is quickened by the Holy Ghost, and by His purity is elevated." But all other creatures are also called breath—"Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord"[1]—because they also proceed from the Spirit of God, although they are not endued with reason and freedom. Therefore we must care for every creature, and neither beat nor overwork it. Blessed is the man who is merciful to his beast.

God is a Spirit, an incomplex Being. And in what manner does the Spirit manifest itself? By thought, word, and deed. Therefore God, as an incomplex Being, is not composed of a series or of a multitude of thoughts, or of a multitude of words or creations, but He is wholly, in one incomplex thought, God—the Trinity, or, in one incomplex word—the Trinity, or in three Persons, united together in one. But He is also wholly in everything that exists, penetrating and filling everything with Himself. For instance, when you say a prayer, He is in every word of it, and like a Holy Fire, penetrates each word—everyone may experience this for himself if he will pray sincerely, fervently, with faith and love. But, especially, He is wholly in the names belonging to Him: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Trinity, or the Lord, the Lord God, the Lord God of Sabbaoth, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Holy Spirit, the Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth . . . and in His other names. The Angels and the Saints are also near to us in their names, as their names and our faith in them are near to our hearts; for they are nothing else but the breath of God, and are "one spirit with the Lord."[2]

Do the saints, whom we call upon, pray for us? They certainly pray for us. If I, a sinful man, a cold-hearted, sometimes wicked and malevolently disposed man, praying for others who have instructed or have not instructed me to pray for them and do not doubt, do not weary of saying their names during prayer, although sometimes not heartily, then will not God's saints—those lamps and torches, burning in God and before God, full of love to their earthly brethren—pray for me and for us when we call upon them with faith, hope, and love, according to our strength? They, our speedy helpers, pray also for our souls, as our Divinely-enlightened mother, the Holy Church, assures us. Pray, therefore, undoubtingly to God's saints, asking their intercession before God on your behalf. They hear you in the Holy Ghost; only pray in the Holy Ghost, from your soul

[1] Psalm cl. 6. [2] Corinthians vi. 17.

for when you thus sincerely pray, then the Holy Ghost breathes in you, Who is the Spirit of truth and sincerity, and is our truth and sincerity. The one same Holy Ghost is in us and in the saints. The saints are holy through the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifies them and eternally dwells in them.

Lord! Thou, Whose love to us infinitely surpasses the love of every father, of every mother, of the tenderest wife, have mercy upon us!

Holy Virgin, our Lady! Thou, Whose love to Christians surpasses the love of every earthly mother, of every wife, hear our prayers and save us! May we constantly remember Thee! May we always pray fervently to Thee! May we ever undoubtingly and unfailingly take refuge beneath Thy holy protection!

We pray to the all-merciful and most pure Mother of God —and She prays for us. We glorify Her—She Who is above all glory—and She prepares eternal glory for us. We often say to Her: "Rejoice," and She asks Her Son and God: "My beloved Son, give them everlasting joy in return for greeting Me with joy."

Believe as undoubtingly that God sees you, as you believe that your father, or anyone else standing face to face with you, sees you, only with this difference, that the Heavenly Father sees everything that is in you, entirely what you are, and all creatures, the angels, the saints, us sinners, the animals—sees everything at once in the same way as the sun lights everything at once, besides which "The eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the sun."[1] A lively sense of God's presence is a source of peace and joy for the soul. Doubt in His presence produces distress, affliction, and oppression. Heartfelt prayer is the source of peace of heart, whilst insincere, superficial, inattentive prayer wounds the heart.

Jesus Christ, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is an unfathomable abyss of love to men. In this abyss of mercy plenteousness of mercy for all will be found, only turn to God with faith, hope, and hearty contrition for your iniquities and your offences against the Lord, our Master and Benefactor.

God is nearer to us than any man at every time. He is nearer to me than my raiment, nearer than the air or light,

[1] Sirach xxiii. 19.

nearer than my wife, father, mother, daughter, son, or friend. I live in Him, soul and body. I breathe in Him, think in Him, feel, consider, intend, speak, undertake, work in Him. "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being."[1] "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."[2] Therefore we must always see God before us at our right hand, we must be strong, and in order not to sin we must so place ourselves that nothing could thrust God from our thoughts and hearts, that nothing could hide Him from us—no undue partiality for food, drink, money, dress, house and its furniture, nor for any person—that no worldly distractions and pastimes could deprive us of our Most-sweet, Most-beloved Lord, but that we may every hour and every minute belong to Him, and perpetually be with Him, as He Himself is perpetually with us, as He constantly cares for us and guards us. But when I sin, or when I have any undue partiality for anything, then He is far from me, not in respect to space, for He at all times fills everything, but in respect to my own spiritual withdrawal from Him, to my own indifference towards Him, in respect to His actually depriving me of His grace and His presence in my heart, for then His enemy, the Devil, dwells in me.

As in a sea, lake, or river every particle of water is united to other particles and is surrounded by them, or as in the air every particle of it is surrounded by other particles and is united to them, so all of us earth-born creatures are surrounded by God on all sides, whilst those of us who are pure, or being purified, are united to Him and are everywhere with Him. All of us earth-born creatures—like water, like air, like a tree with many branches—form one whole, though often broken, by the envy of the enemy, by selfishness, irritability, animosity, disputes, pride, heresy and dissent, envy, avarice, unsociability, and other passions. On the other side, the Devil and his angels also form amongst themselves another whole, like dark, malignant, poisonous water or fiery, suffocating, deadly air. They surround us and endeavour to break into our souls when we are off our guard, or under the domination of various passions, in order to darken, disturb, oppress, inflame, and in every way torment us. Thus, for instance, you may sometimes chance to be walking in the pure sweet-scented air, when suddenly a foul odour from a cesspool strikes your sense of smell in an unpleasant manner, and you wish to pass quickly by this place, so as to breathe the wholesome air again: the stink of the Devil is like unto this. The Lord Himself likens the dark devilish hordes to air and water. He says: "The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew,

[1] Acts xvii. 28. [2] Philippians ii. 13.

and beat upon that house" (that is, upon the man, upon the human soul); "and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock."[1]

We are in the habit of saying: "Had I not looked, I should not have been tempted;" "Had I not heard, my heart would not have ached;" "Had I not tasted, I should not have desired." You see how many temptations arise from our own sight, hearing, and taste. How many have suffered and still suffer because their hearts were not firm in their good inclinations, because they imprudently looked with impure eyes, because they heard with ears unaccustomed to discern between good and evil, because they greedily tasted! The senses of the sin-loving, greedy flesh, unrestrained by reason and by God's commandments, have drawn them into various worldly passions, have darkened their minds and hearts, deprived them of peace of heart, and taken away their free-will, making them the slaves of these senses. Thus you see how necessary it is to look, listen, taste, smell, and feel prudently; or, rather, how necessary it is to guard your heart so that through your outward senses, as through a window, no sin may steal in, and that the author himself of sin—the Devil—may not darken and wound that heavenly fledgeling, our soul, with his poisonous and deathly arrows.

The soul receives the Lord into it in the Life-giving Sacrament by the thought of faith and by the heart's acknowledgment that the Lord Himself is truly present in the sacrament, whilst our body receives the Lord through the mouth and belly. When the soul receives the Lord with firm faith, then the Lord fills in a single moment both the soul, as an incomplex being, and the whole of the body with all its joints—because the soul fills the entire body, and because of the all-filling property of the Godhead.

In the Christian life, temptations and tests or trials of our spiritual condition are necessary; and as our life, like the furniture of a house, becomes covered with various stains, it is necessary to cleanse it. As for testing objects made, for instance, of silver, instruments are required, so likewise for testing the state of the soul, men are required, like for like, who, willingly or unwillingly, intentionally or quite unthinkingly, show us by their conduct in relation to us, in a manner apparent both to ourselves and others, whether we are obedient to God's commands, declared to us in the Gospel, or not—whether we live according to the spirit, mortifying in ourselves the desires of the flesh, or according to the flesh, being obedient slaves to the will of the flesh and to carnal thoughts and passions; so that we, recognising that we

[1] St. Matthew vii. 25.

are not living in accordance with the will of God, not in accordance with the commandments of our Sweetest Saviour, but in accordance with our own sinful and blind will, may speedily amend and zealously follow the commandments of the Divine Gospel.

Our body lives by means of those elements of which it is itself formed, constantly absorbing into itself air, water, and other organic bodies; our soul lives by means of the Divine Spirit, from Which it has its origin, and constantly absorbs into itself, for supporting its life, the life of God the Trinity, through the light of the intellect, through good inclinations and desires of the heart and will, and constancy in goodness. As the body, when it is not nourished by the elements natural to it, cannot live, and dies, so our soul, when not nourished by prayer or good thoughts, feelings, and works, also dies. As in our bodily nature the nourishment and growth of the body are satisfactorily accomplished for a time, but if accidentally, through food or drink or breathing, any poison or contagion enters the body, then suffering is at once occasioned, and even death, should not help be given in time; so in our spiritual nature everything goes on satisfactorily for a time, but if it is corrupted by the Devil, then it suffers grievously, becoming as if benumbed, and it requires the speedy help of the heavenly Physician, the God of spirits, which can only be received through the prayer of faith. (The artifices of the Devil in the soul of a man correspond to the action of poison upon the bodily nature; with the difference that the poison of material nature seldom enters into our body, while the artifices of the Devil are always with and about us.) As, for the nourishment and support of the life of our body, the means by which it lives are ever at hand, namely, light, air, water, and food—of which air, as the most necessary element for life, constantly surrounds us, and water also is always easily to be found, as well as vegetable and animal food—so also the forces for supporting the life of our soul are always ready in abundance—its spiritual food, drink, and raiment—in God the Trinity. Being wholly in every place, like air, or like mental light, the Lord is ready at every moment of our life—according to our faith, and on account of the constantly prayerful disposition of our soul—to support our spiritual forces by His all-active grace; to be the uninterrupted light of our mind and heart; the air by which our soul breathes; the food by which it is nourished and strengthened; the life-giving warmth by which it is warmed; and the garment with which it not only covers its sinful nakedness, but with which it also adorns

itself as with royal purple—that is, the garment of Christ's justification. Man, every moment of his existence, is between two mediums—material and spiritual—from which he receives everything. The one supports his bodily, the other his spiritual nature; the one is visible nature, the other the Infinite Personal Spirit of God, Which, being wholly everywhere, is above all, and, containing everything, is Itself not limited by anything. Every man of himself is so insignificant and helpless that he receives everything necessary to support his existence, not from himself, but from without; he himself is nothing. And as his body is supported by air, food, and drink, so his soul is supported by prayer, by reading God's Word, and by the communion of the Holy Mysteries. On the other hand, as in the kingdom of the most merciful and Almighty God there is also a place for fallen evil spirits, and as their place of abode is the very air and earth inhabited by men, and as man from the very beginning was allured by them to evil, as they were always, still are, and will be together with the human race until the end of the world, they form, so to say, a medium by which we are surrounded, and in which we live. We, who are free, and at the same time fallen beings although we were re-established by the Son of God, and have become free through this grace, by faith, love to God, and by good works—ought, by continual prayer to God, to guard ourselves from the antagonistic forces fighting against our soul, wishing to make us their prisoners, and similar to them in spirit. We must be watchful to the utmost so as not to become like unto the sub-celestial spirits of evil by our spirit and acts, lest they should become the breathing of our soul instead of God—lest the evil constituting their nature should become our evil. We must also ever bear in mind that greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world,[1] and that the Lord keeps them too in His full power, and only permits them—as much as His goodness, mercy, and omnipotence allow—to act in the world, to teach and correct men. But there are men who have the Devil for their garment, food and drink, in the same manner as true Christians clothe themselves in Christ, and feed upon His Body and Blood. Throughout the world everything is double—one against the other; the spirit and the flesh, good and evil. Satan has his agents and helpers to spread his dominion amongst men; God has the angels, whom He gives to every Christian to guard him and guide him into Christ's blessed kingdom.

Those who do not believe in God's omnipresence in their thoughts and hearts depreciate the power of God, do not

[1] 1 John iv. 4.

ascribe to Him even that property which air possesses, for air is everywhere. Is not the Creator of the air everywhere? Unbelief in God's omnipresence—or, in general, any sin—serves itself as a strong proof that He is everywhere present. Thus at the time of unbelief my heart is straitened, experiences a kind of burning sensation; it is weary and tormented; my mind is darkened, and I am in a state of desolation. But when I believe, with lively faith, that God is everywhere, present in every place, and therefore that He is ever with me and within me, my heart expands; it is free, light, alive, and my mind is clear—I am in a joyful state. Thus the very thing which slays me serves as the most striking proof of the existence of that in which I was doubting. Unbelief torments me, because it is a calumny of my own heart or of the evil spirit against God, Who is my life. The mental denial by my free soul of life itself is naturally and rightly its death. Again, God is a thinking Being, and my soul is also a thinking being derived from the first thought; therefore my intercourse with God takes place through thought, through faith of the heart, which is nothing else but a lively and clear thought that God is in every place. When I have no such thought it signifies that I have the opposite negative one; when the principle that unites my soul to God is cut off, then there is no true life for me, and there only remains the phantom of an outward, false, animal life.

The degrees of beatitude and torment in the next world will be different. This is proved by the present state of the souls of different people or of the same man at different times under different conditions. The more simple, the better and more sociable the man is, the more blessed he inwardly is; the more deceitful, evil, and selfish he is, the more unhappy; the firmer his faith and the stronger his love are, the more blessed he is; the weaker his faith and love are, the weaker, the worse he feels. Thus those who have little or no faith, those who hate their fellow-creatures, are the most unhappy of men. By this we can understand what future torments will be.

Love every man in spite of his falling into sin. Never mind the sins, but remember that the foundation of the man is the same—the image of God. Other people's weaknesses strike us: they are malicious, proud, envious, avaricious, covetous, greedy; but you too are not without evil—perhaps even there is more in you than in others. At least in respect to sins men are equal. It is said: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."[1] All are guilty before God, and we all

[1] Romans iii. 23.

equally require His mercy. Therefore, besides loving each other, we must bear with each other and pardon—"forgive them that trespass against us"—in order that our heavenly Father may "forgive us our trespasses."[1] Thus, with all your soul honour and love in every man the image of God, not regarding his sins, for God alone is Holy and without sin; and see how He loves us, how much He has created and still creates for us, punishing us mercifully and forgiving us bounteously and graciously. Honour the man also, in spite of his sins, for he can always amend.

Some men of progress look upon the Church as their enemy. But is there anyone more full of love, more desirous of our welfare, and wiser in his love to men (after God Himself) than the Church? Everything that is most conformable to our nature and most necessary for its good, all this is contained in the Church, as in a treasury, as the words of life are contained in the Gospel. The Church is the true mother of all those who rightly believe in Christ, the truest friend of Christians. She sympathises and answers to all the essential requirements of the soul and body of the Christian by active relief, or by affording help through the power of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, in Whom every soul lives.

Concerning praise. The soul involuntarily longs to praise when we gaze upon the starry sky; but still more when, in looking upon the sky and the stars, we represent to ourselves God's providence towards men, how infinitely He loves men, cares for their eternal beatitude, not having even spared His only-begotten Son for our salvation and our repose in the Heavenly Kingdom! It is impossible not to praise God when you remember that you were created from nothing, that you were predestined from the foundation of the world for eternal blessedness, quite without cause, not in accordance with your merits—when you remember what grace God has bestowed upon you for your salvation during all your life-time, what an innumerable multitude of sins are forgiven you, and this not once or twice but an incalculable number of times, what a multitude of natural gifts are bestowed upon you, beginning with health down to the current of air, down to the drop of water. We are involuntarily incited to praise when we see with wonder the infinite variety of things created on the earth, in the animal kingdom, in the vegetable kingdom, and in the mineral kingdom. What wise order in all, both in great and small! We involuntarily praise and exclaim: "O Lord!

[1] St. Matthew vi. 14.

how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: Glory to Thee, Lord, Who hath created everything!"[1]

If the Church has composed and transmitted for general use prayers and psalms to God the Trinity and to His saints, then this signifies that God hears our prayers and is always near those who pray. But people mostly pray as if there were no God with them, or as if He did not heed their prayers. Let us ascribe to the Lord at least the same amount of attention that good parents show to the requests of their children, at least that provident and attentive love which good parents have for their children. So the Lord Himself teaches: "If ye then," says He, "being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"[2] Thus our requests or prayers will also be fulfilled if we pray with our whole heart. This is true. This is from daily experience.

When malice against anyone is roused in your heart, then believe with your whole heart that it is the work of the Devil working in your heart: hate him and his brood, and malice will leave you. (Do not acknowledge it as anything of your own, and do not sympathise with it.) This is from experience. Unfortunately, the Devil shelters himself behind us, and conceals himself, whilst we are blind, and, thinking we are doing everything of ourselves, begin to stand up for the Devil's works as if they were our own, as if for something just, although every idea of there being any justice in our passion is entirely false, impious, and hurtful. Guide yourself by the same rule also in regard to others. When you see that anybody bears malice against you, do not consider his malice as his own doing; no, he is only the passive instrument of the evil one; he has not yet recognised his flattery and is deceived by him. Pray to God that the enemy may leave him and that the Lord may enlighten the eyes of his heart, darkened by the poisonous, noxious breathing of the spirit of evil. We must pray fervently for all those subjected to passions, for the enemy works within them.

Passions are contagious owing to our spiritual organisation; for instance, malice, even when not yet expressed in words—not expressed by acts, but still concealed in the heart, and reflected slightly in the face and eyes—is already transmitted to the soul of the man against whom I bear malice, and is also perceptible to others; if I am disturbed by passion my disturbance communicates itself to the heart of another,

[1] Psalm civ. 24. [2] St. Matthew vii. 11.

like a kind of spiritual overflow of an impure current from one spiritual receptacle into another. If you eradicate in yourself your passion against your brother, you eradicate the same passion in him too; when you are pacified he will also become pacified. What a close connection there is between souls! How true are the words of the Apostle: "For we are members one of another[1]; we, being many, are one bread and one body[2]; and hath made of one blood all nations of men."[3] Therefore the Lord's commandment requires that: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[4] It is upon the mutual feeling or understanding of our souls that the efficacy or inefficacy of the words of a preacher is founded; if the preacher does not speak from his heart, but hypocritically, the listeners, by their inward instinct, understand the discordance of the preacher's words with his heart, with his life, and they have not the power which they might have had if the preacher had spoken to them sincerely, and especially if he had himself in reality fulfilled his words. Indeed, between human souls there is too close a connection and communication. This is why good, pious, sincere dispositions, and especially good works, are communicated to the souls of others.

As the man consists of a soul and body, so, correspondingly, there are double means for supporting his life—spiritual and bodily ones. Those for supporting the bodily life are air, food, drink, light and warmth, and those for supporting the spiritual life, prayer (like air), reading the word of God, the life-giving Sacrament, and pious meditations.

You know by experience that neither walls nor the place where you live form any obstacles to the flight of thought; it can in a moment be borne from the house to beyond the clouds, or from one part of the world to another, from one kingdom unto another, from one town to another; but your soul, that thinking, reasoning element, is the image of God—a small image of the Infinite Spirit, God. If your thought is not restricted by four walls, and is not limited by space and time, then what can restrict the Lord, Who has created all things? Can He be restricted by walls—can He be limited by space and time, however infinite according to us they may be? O, His dominion is in every place! His eyes see all and everything. He sees, as upon the palms of His hands, even those who hide themselves in secret places, among the mountains, or in inaccessible castles. This is why the Lord sometimes hides His face from you and leaves you in the anguish of

[1] Ephesians iv. 25. [2] 1 Corinthians x. 17. [3] Acts xvii. 26.
[4] St. Matthew xxii. 39.

spiritual darkness, so that you may always remember by whose light your soul lives—that is, by the light of God—and that if God turns His face from you and takes His Holy Spirit from your heart, then you will be truly left in the darkness of hell, in infernal torments, and thus you will indeed, although only in part, understand what the future hell will be.

Believe steadfastly and always remember that you have a dual nature, that there are two men in you, the one carnal, diseased by passions, old, of the Devil, seeking carnal things and setting his life upon them; you must mortify the old man within you and not satisfy him in anything, not bend to his sinful, persistent, sickly lamentations; whilst the other man in you is spiritual, new, healthy, of Christ, everywhere seeking Christ, living by Christ (instead of by worldly desires), and finding peace and life in Christ, wishing for nothing in this world but Christ, and counting earthly blessings but dung, in order to win Christ.[1] As we must despise in every way the requirements of the former man because their fulfilment destroys the soul, so we must fulfil in every way the requirements of the latter because they lead to true and eternal life. Let every Christian learn this, and labour to actually fulfil what he thus learns.

23/3/99

Do not be despondent when the clouds of hell, one darker than the other, descend upon your soul; when infernal malice, envy, doubt, obstinacy, and other passions, rise up in your soul; know surely that the gathering of these dark clouds upon your mental horizon is inevitable; but they are not always there and will not remain long; they are like the appearance of dark clouds on the sky in nature—they pass over and disappear, after which the mental atmosphere of the soul is cleared up again. In nature there must be clouds on the sky, and the darkening of the light of day; but these clouds are not constant, they soon pass away, and then the light of the sun shines again with renewed power.

What a wonderful creation is man! Look! that which was created from earth contains the breath of God—personal, independent, free—the image of God Himself. How much wisdom and beauty there are in the construction of man's bodily tabernacle, how much wisdom and love—in a word, how much likeness to God is shown in the life itself of the man who has dominion over the earth; as it is said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them

[1] Philippians iii. 8.

have dominion . . . over all the earth."[1] But in order that you should not grow proud, see what happens to you, man, when that which is according to God's image in you goes forth from your body as from its temple! You will be as though you had never been, you will disappear from this world; the temple of your spirit will lose all its goodness and beauty, it will become earth, and return unto the ground, from out of which it was taken,[2] completely mingling with it as a part of it. What a wonderful creation of God is man! God has wonderfully placed in the dust His image, the immortal spirit. But marvel, Christian, still more at the wisdom, omnipotence and mercy of the Creator: He changes and transforms the bread and wine into His most-pure Body and into His most pure Blood, and takes up His abode in them Himself, by His most pure and Life-giving Spirit, so that His Body and Blood are together Spirit and Life. And wherefore is this? In order to cleanse you, a sinner, from your sins, to sanctify you and to unite you, thus sanctified to Himself, and thus united to give you blessedness and immortality. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"[3]

Have you seen how respectfully, humbly, and orderly subordinates of all classes and all stations behave in relation to their chiefs, and thus, in their mutual intercourse, fulfil their duty of subordination? Have you not seen with what veneration and strict etiquette those that surround a king behave? And all these are only examples of the behaviour of creatures in relation to the Creator; and it is in this right behaviour in respect to the Creator, in their obedience to His laws, that their welfare and the object of their life consist.

Sometimes a man seems to pray fervently, but yet his prayer does not bring into his heart the fruits of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Why is this? It is because in praying the appointed prayers he has not sincerely repented of those sins which he has committed during the day, by which he has defiled his heart, the temple of Christ, and by which he has angered the Lord. But had he remembered them, had he repented of them in all sincerity, and judged himself impartially, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,"[4] would immediately have entered into his heart. In the prayers of the Orthodox Church there is an enumeration of sins, but not of all; and often the very sins by which we have bound ourselves are not mentioned; therefore, we must absolutely enumerate them ourselves during

[1] Genesis i. 26. [2] Genesis iii. 19. [3] Romans xi. 33.
[4] Philippians iv. 7.

our prayer, clearly recognising their gravity with a feeling of humility and heartfelt contrition. This is why, in the evening prayers at the enumeration of sins, it is said: "I have done wrong either in this or in that"—that is, it is left to our own will to make mention of these or those sins.

Our faith and Church is like a most honoured, holy, godly, firm, venerable woman, who never grows old, and in whom ever dwells a young, living spirit, giving life to her true children. As we always behave with great respect to old people, honouring their grey hair and wisdom—the fruits of experience—and highly value each of their words, and apply them to our own life, so ought we especially to honour the Church, venerate her holiness, antiquity, her unshaken firmness, her divinely enlightened wisdom and spiritual experience, her soul-saving commandments and ordinances, her divine services, sacraments and rites. How can we do otherwise than respect her, even if only for having saved in her bosom an innumerable multitude of people, transplanting them into the abode of eternal peace and joy, not forgetting them even after their death, but remembering them until now upon earth, eternally praising and glorifying their virtues as her true children? Where will you find a more grateful friend, a more tender mother? And therefore, may Christians attach themselves wholly and with all their hearts to the Church of Christ, that they may be firmly established unto the end of their temporal life! May they all be zealous of the fulfilment of all her commandments and ordinances, and may they obtain in her eternal salvation through Christ Jesus our Lord!

In accordance with God's most wise order in this world, one thing precedes another, and one is changed into another: dishonour and honour, poverty and wealth, health and sickness. Before bestowing wealth upon anyone, God often tries him by extreme poverty, depriving, on the other hand, the rich of everything; before honour, by dishonour; and those raised to honour, by humiliation, so that we may learn to value God's gifts, and not be proud in our prosperity, knowing that it is the gift of the Master, undeserved by us.

It is necessary to rouse the heart to pray, otherwise it will become quite dry. The attributes of prayer must be: love of God, sincerity, and simplicity. We must pray in spirit, because God is a spirit, and not flesh; with truth, and not falsely, because God is the truth. The same may be said in regard to prayers to the saints. Do not call upon them only with the lips—for they have neither lips nor voice, nothing corporeal—but

with your heart or soul burning within you. Then they will hear you; for everything seeks that which is akin to it. Yes; not flesh and blood will inherit the kingdom of God, but the pure spirit burning with love to God.

"Quench not the spirit,"[1] says the Word of God. Let every Christian, especially every priest and instructor of children, remember this. We who are priests must especially burn with the spirit in our high service to God and mankind. How much we might have done for God, for men, and for ourselves, if we had applied ourselves to our work with faith and love, zealously, warmly, energetically! And how little, dry, fruitless, will be our service if we do our work indolently, slothfully, coldly, without any zeal and energy! We shall have much to answer for before God, both for ourselves and for those intrusted to our care.

Watch yourself when a poor man, needing help, asks it of you. The enemy will endeavour at that time to chill your heart, and fill it with indifference, and even scorn, towards him that is in want. Overcome in yourself these un-Christian and inhuman dispositions; incite your heart to compassionate love towards this man like unto you in all respects, to this member of Christ and your own—"for we are members one of another"[2]—to this temple of the Holy Ghost, in order that Christ the Lord may love and help you too; and, whatever the needy may ask of you, fulfil his request according to your power. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."[3]

Pronounce the words of the prayer with heartfelt firmness. When praying in the evening, do not forget to confess in prayer to the Holy Ghost with all sincerity and contrition, those sins into which you have fallen during the past day. A few moments of fervent repentance, and you will be cleansed by the Holy Ghost from every impurity; you will be whiter than snow, and tears, purifying the heart will flow from your eyes; you will be covered with the garment of Christ's righteousness and united to Him, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

Spiritual poverty consists in esteeming oneself as though not existing, and God alone as existing; in honouring His words above everything in the world, and in not sparing anything to fulfil them, even one's own life; in considering God's Will in everything, both for ourselves and others, entirely renouncing our own will. The man who is poor in spirit

[1] 1 Thessalonians v. 19. [2] Ephesians iv. 25. [3] St. Matthew v. 42.

desires and says with his whole heart: "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy Will be done in earth as it is in heaven." It is as though he himself disappears; everywhere and in everything he wishes to see God—in himself and in others. "Let everything be Thine, not mine." He wishes to contemplate God's holiness in himself and in all—His kingdom, also His Will; also to see Him alone entirely filling the human heart, as it should be, because He alone is All-merciful and All-perfect, All-creating; whilst the enemy—the Devil and his instruments, and those who oppose God—are thieves in the kingdom of God, and adversaries of God. To him who is poor in spirit the whole world is as nothing. Everywhere he sees God alone giving life to everything, and ruling everything; for him there is no place without God, no moment without God; everywhere and at every minute he is with God, and as though with Him alone. He who is poor in spirit does not dare and does not think of trying to comprehend the incomprehensible, to discover God's mysteries, to philosophise on the highest; he believes in the single word of the Lord, the Life-giver, knowing that every word of His is truth, spirit, and eternal life; and in the words of His Church, ever instructed in all truth by the Holy Ghost, he believes as a child believes his father or mother, not requiring proofs, but perfectly relying upon them. He who is poor in spirit considers himself the very last and the most sinful of all, reckons himself worthy of being trampled under foot by everyone.

How vividly God's Saints represented God to themselves! —the Saints who through the Holy Ghost compiled prayers for their own and our guidance. In what fear and trembling they stood before God in prayer, but also with what love and hope! Every word of their prayers says: "God is with us; and God within us hears each of our words, sees every thought, every wish, every tear."

Sometimes we stand praying in church or at home, in a state of spiritual and bodily prostration; then powerless, cold, unfruitful is our soul, like some heathen, unfruitful temple; but as soon as we make an effort, and force our heart to sincere prayer to God, turn our thoughts and heart towards Him with living faith, our soul immediately becomes vivified, warm, and fruitful. What sudden tranquillity, what lightness, what emotion, what inward holy fire, what tears for our sins, what a sincere feeling of sorrow that by them we have displeased the Most-merciful Master; what light in the heart and mind, what an abundant stream of living water is

diffused in the heart, flowing freely from the tongue, or from the pen and pencil, if we are writing, upon the paper! The wilderness of the soul blossoms like a lily at the coming of the Lord into the heart. O, why do we not turn our hearts oftener towards the Lord? How much peace and comfort ever lie concealed in Him for us! "Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee!"[1]

How artful and watchful a bird is! It does not let itself be caught in God's wide world, but when it sees anybody approaching and wishing to seize it, it immediately flies up from the earth and thus saves itself from the fowlers. So, also, the Christian must be wise and watchful in order that the incorporeal fowler may not catch his soul. Our soul is like a heavenly bird; the Devil, a wicked fowler, seeking to devour souls. As the bird, flying up to heaven, thus saves itself from the fowler, so likewise we, when we see the enemy—the Devil—striving to catch our soul by means of earthly things, must immediately forsake these things with all our heart, and must not for a moment attach ourselves to them, but must fly up in our thoughts to Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and thus we shall easily be delivered "from the snare of the fowler."[2]

The way to succeed in any good work. When you are praying at home, at evening, or at morning prayer, or in the church during Divine service, be solicitous in your heart to accomplish this particular good work, and heartily desire to fulfil it to the glory of God. The Lord and His Most-pure Mother will unfailingly teach you, will instil in your heart some bright idea how to accomplish it. If you wish to write a discourse or a sermon, and do not know what to write about, if there is no living water in your heart, you have only to be solicitous of this during your prayer. The Lord and His Most-pure Mother will unfailingly and clearly show you the subject for your sermon and its parts, and your mind and heart will be enlightened by a clear knowledge of all sides of the subject.

Thank God every day with your whole heart for having given to you life according to His image and likeness—an intelligently free and immortal life. Especially thank God for having restored and guided you again unto life eternal after you had fallen into eternal death, and for having done so not simply by the action of His omnipotence, for this would not have been in conformity to His justice, but by having given for our redemption His only begotten Son, Who suffered

[1] Psalm xxxi. 19. [2] Psalm xci. 3.

and died for us. Thank Him also for again daily bestowing life upon you, who have fallen an innumerable multitude of times, by your own free will, through sins, from life into death, and that He does so as soon as you only say from your whole heart: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee!"[1] Thank Him also for often delivering you from sickness, you who imprudently throw yourself into danger and sickness, the precursors of bodily death, for correcting your faults, and for not depriving you of earthly life, knowing that it is dear to you, and that you are not yet ready for the future, eternal life. Thank Him for all your means of existence, for all the joys and sorrows of life; for everything is from Him, the All-merciful Father; everything comes from the First Origin of Life, Who has apportioned and lent life to all.

That man is of a noble and elevated spirit who mercifully and generously scatters his gifts upon all, and rejoices when he has an opportunity of doing good and giving pleasure to everybody without thinking of being rewarded for it. That man is of a noble and elevated spirit who never grows conceited and haughty towards those who frequent him and avail themselves of his bounties, does not neglect them in any respect, does not underrate them in any degree in his thoughts, but esteems them as he esteemed them at their first meeting with him, or much higher than at that time. As it is, it often happens that we grow conceited and proud towards those who have become ours, and, having become accustomed to them, speedily grow tired of them, and reckon them as nothing: we often place a man lower than a beloved animal or a beloved object.

It is sometimes well during prayer to say a few words of our own, breathing fervent faith and love to the Lord. Yes, let us not always converse with God in the words of others, not always remain children in faith and hope; we must also show our own mind, indite a good matter from our own heart also.[1] Moreover, we grow too much accustomed to the words of others and grow cold in prayer. And how pleasing to the Lord this lisping of our own is, coming directly from a believing, loving, and thankful heart. It is impossible to explain this: it is only needful to say that when you are praying to God with your own words the soul trembles with joy, it becomes wholly inflamed, vivified, and beatified. You will utter few words, but you will experience such blessedness as you would not have

[1] St. Luke xv. 18. [2] Psalm xliv. 1.

obtained from saying the longest and most touching prayers of others, pronounced out of habit and insincerely.

When you ask anything of the Lord, immediately contemplate His merciful and generous Right Hand, bestowing upon you His gifts, for it is His Right Hand that has given, and still gives, from God's abundance, everything to all, and consider as foolishness any doubt whether you will or will not obtain that which you ask for—a foolishness similar to that of which the Psalmist said, "The fool hath said in his heart: there is no God."[1] Thus, in asking any good and generous man for help, we represent to ourselves beforehand his outstretched hand; for earthly benefactors, after the example of their All-merciful Father, are merciful and generous, and give us that which we ask them for immediately after our request, as it is said: "What man is there of you, whom if his son shall ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, Which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him?"[2]

When you experience oppressive waywardness of heart and unbelief in respect to any object of faith, then know that the enemy is in your heart, and that he mocks at your ignorance, your weakness, and your inconstancy in faith. Sincerely condemn at once your foolishness, your blindness, your sinful inconstancy in faith, and your ingratitude to God, for the former light of your heart and former benefits, received by you through faith in that object (for instance, in the relics of the saints) which your heart in its sinful obstinacy now denies, or in which it does not now believe as it formerly believed, and the Master will have mercy upon you; your anguish will cease, and you will be at rest. O, the enemy wishes that even in matters of faith everything should be in accordance with his falsehood!

The new man (regenerate) finds pleasure in obedience, whilst the old man wishes to resist and obey. Therefore, O Lord, Thy Will be done. I accept, as an expression of Thy Will, all that is required of me by the authorities set over me, all that others do to me (patience), all that happens to me, for nothing happens without Thee. Thou art in everything, throughout all and everything.

God is a spiritual Being from Whom everything has received its existence, and without Whom nothing can be imagined;

[1] Psalm xiv. 1. [2] St. Matthew vii. 9-11.

in Whom everything has its origin, continuation, life, and preservation; Who is infinitely greater than any time and space; Who never had either beginning nor ending; before Whom everything is as though it did not exist, Who is wholly everywhere; Who is not restricted either by any space or any atom, nor mountain, nor heavenly body, nor sea, nor air, nor fire, nor earth; Who Himself eternally fills all space, and Who Himself by His Power keeps in existence everything that exists, Who is in every place, in every unimaginable point of space, and Himself unlimitedly contains every space—in a word, God is that Which Is, that is to say, as it were, alone existing, the One Who Is.

If, during service, your brother does anything irregularly, or somewhat negligently, do not become irritated, either inwardly or outwardly with him, but be generously indulgent to his fault, remembering that during your life you yourself commit many, many faults, that you yourself are a man with all infirmities, that God is long-suffering and most merciful, and that he forgives you and all of us our iniquities an innumerable multitude of times. Remember the words of the Lord's Prayer: "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." These words should always remind us that we ourselves at all times are great trespassers, great sinners before God, and that, remembering this, we should be humble in the depths of our hearts, and not be very severe to the faults of our brethren, weak like ourselves; that as we do not judge ourselves severely, we must not judge others severely, for our brethren are—our members, like ourselves. Irritability of temper proceeds from want of self-knowledge, from pride, and also from the fact that we do not consider the great corruption of our nature, and know but little the meek and humble Jesus.

God tries the various sinful attachments of our hearts in different ways: one, the miserly, He tries by the loss of his money or his property, or a part of it, allowing thieves to steal, or brigands to rob him; another by fire, or inundation; another by useless expenditure through unsuccessful business affairs; another by illness and expenses for medicines and doctors connected with the illness; another by the loss of wife, sister, or friend; another by dishonour. He tries all in different ways, in order to disclose to each the weak diseased parts of his heart, and to teach each one to correct himself. In many a sword shall pierce through their own soul that the thoughts of their hearts may be revealed.[1] Therefore, whatever loss may have occurred

[1] St. Luke ii. 35.

to your property, believe that it is the will of God, and say: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."[1]

Why does a man sometimes suddenly get into such a frenzy that he becomes violently angered, speaks quickly, abruptly and incoherently, wrings his hands, tears his hair, or in his passion strikes others, foolishly breaks everything that falls into his hands, and behaves like a madman, or like one infuriated? Evidently because in his heart the subcelestial spirits of evil are working, instigating men to every wickedness, and breathing evil and destruction upon all and everything. Why are there both suicides of all kinds, as well as murderers of others? From the working of the immemorial suicide and murderer—the Devil—in the hearts of suicides and murderers. This is why Christ, the Saviour, and the Christian religion command everyone to have that meekness and humility which do not allow the spirits of evil and pride, seeking the death of all and each one, to work in the hearts of true Christians. The Lord says: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart."[2] The wrath of man is a terrible unnatural phenomenon in a man; it is often aroused in the heart by the most unimportant causes —mostly through the self-love or pride concealed in our heart. We must remember that "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."[3]

For him who truly believes in God, all material earthly things and all visible worlds, as it were, vanish; he cannot imagine a point of space without God; everywhere he contemplates the One Infinite Being—God. He represents to himself that with every breath of air he breathes God; for him the Lord is everywhere and in everything, and creatures as though they did not exist, while he himself willingly vanishes mentally in order to give place also in himself to the one God, Who alone is, and Who works within him in everything.

Sometimes, just when we begin to delight in the Lord, the enemy soon after, either himself or through men, brings the greatest sorrow upon us. Such is the lot of those who are labouring in this life for the Lord. For instance, you have just received peace and joy in the cup of the Lord, and sometimes immediately after the service a fiery temptation assails you, and with it the affliction connected with it; even at the very Cup the enemy sets his snares for you and disturbs you by various thoughts, against which you must fight, or else, knowing that you have wished for a long, long time to find rest in God, the

[1] Job i. 21. [2] St. Matthew xi. 29. [3] James i. 20.

enemy will not allow it. As long as the passions still work in us, as long as the old man lives and is not dead within us, until then much sorrow must befall us from various temptations in life and from the struggles between the old man and the new.

Great encouragement, consolation and hope are afforded to those who pray by the following reassuring words of the Lord: "Ask, and it shall be given you . . . ." and further, "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?"[1] If anyone asks me anything, and I, though evil and corrupt by nature, listen to his requests, his words moving my heart to compassion and help, and my hand to giving, then will not my words, my most sincere prayer, move the Fount of mercies, the Lover of mankind, to have mercy upon me and help me, I, who am a sinner, but still His creature, and the work of His hands? If earthly fathers are merciful, will not the Heavenly Father be still more merciful? If I am merciful, will not God, the source of all mercy, be still more merciful? "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"[2] Let your faith and hope in God be strengthened by the earthly relations of fathers to their children. For all of us are the children of the Father which is in heaven, Who is in truth the one Father of all creatures.

When you feel that there is no peace in your heart, through an undue partiality towards anything earthly and worldly, and that, besides this, the heart breathes irritability and malice, be immediately on your guard, and do not let your heart be filled with the devilish fire. Pray fervently, and strengthen by the power of God your passionate, impatient heart. Be firmly assured that the evil is kindled in your heart by the enemy; he chiefly assaults the heart through a full stomach. This is from experience.

When you go to visit any of your relations or friends, do not go to their house in order to eat and drink well, but go there in order to take part in friendly and sincere conversation with them, to refresh your soul from worldly vanities by friendly and loving intercourse, to be mutually comforted by your common faith. For "I seek not yours, but you,"[3] says the Apostle.

Charity, it is said, "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."[4] It often happens to us to see the unrighteous, sinful doings of men, or to hear of them, and we have a sinful

[1] St. Matthew vii. 7, 9.
[2] St. Matthew vii. 11.
[3] 2 Corinthians xii. 14.
[4] 1 Corinthians xiii. 6.

habit of rejoicing at such doings, and of shamelessly expressing our joy by foolish laughter. This is wrong, unchristian, uncharitable and impious. It shows that we have not Christian love for our neighbour in our hearts: for charity "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."[1] Let us, therefore, cease doing this, so that we may not be condemned with the workers of iniquity.

Do not breathe malice, vengeance, and murder even towards animals, lest your own soul should be given up to death by the spiritual enemy breathing wickedness in you even towards dumb animals, and lest you should become accustomed to breathe malice and vengeance against men also. Remember, that animals are called to life by God's mercy that they may enjoy their existence as much as they can during their short life. "The Lord is good to all."[2] Do not beat them, if they are unreasonable, or if they play tricks, or if any of your property is damaged by them. "Blessed is the man who is merciful to his beast."

When holy peace reigns in my soul, then surely the King of Peace dwells within me, the Lord Jesus Christ, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, and then especially I ought to be full of feelings of gratitude to the Lord of Peace, and endeavour with all my strength to preserve this peace within me by means of fervent prayer and by abstaining from every sin, both inward and outward.

The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, who fills the whole universe, passes through all believing, meek, humble, good, and simple human souls, dwelling in them, vivifying and strengthening them. He becomes one spirit with them and everything to them—light, strength, peace, joy, success in their undertakings, especially in a pious life, and everything good—"going through all understanding, pure and most subtil spirits."[3] "We have been all made to drink into one Spirit."[4] All pious people are filled with the Spirit of God similarly as a sponge is filled with water.

When you walk in a forest, garden, or meadow, and see the young shoots of the plants, the fruits on the trees, and the variety of the flowers of the field, learn a lesson from God's plants—namely, the lesson that every tree each summer unfailingly puts forth at least one shoot of considerable size, and unfailingly grows in height and dimensions. It seems as though every tree endeavours each year to advance by the strength that God has

[1] 1 Corinthians xiii. 6. [2] Psalm cxlv. 9.
[3] Wisdom of Solomon vii. 23. [4] 1 Corinthians xii. 13.

given it; therefore, say to yourself, "I, too, must each day, each year, absolutely grow higher and higher morally, better and better, more and more perfect; must advance on the road to the Kingdom of Heaven, or to the Father which is in Heaven, through the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Spirit dwelling and working within me. As the field is adorned by a multitude of flowers, so should the field of my own soul be adorned by all the flowers of virtue; as the trees bring forth flowers and afterwards fruit, so must my soul bring forth the fruits of faith and good works."

Do not passionately care for your flesh; do not cherish it; do not gratify it; and do not strengthen it against the spirit. Otherwise, when it is necessary to labour in spirit—for instance, to pray or write a spiritually moral work—you will find that the flesh has overpowered the spirit and has bound it hand and foot. The flesh overthrows all the impulses of the spirit, and will not let it rise and come to its full power. The spirit will then be the slave of the flesh.

Our love for God or for our neighbour will especially show itself, and its purity, strength, and constancy will be revealed when there is a contrary power (of the Devil) struggling and acting like fire in our hearts, and endeavouring to implant aversion, antagonism, contempt, hatred, and enmity in our hearts. Love is strengthened within us when the opposing forces endeavour, so to say, to uproot it, whilst we struggle in every way against these opposing forces, and by our struggle with the enemy purify, raise, and strengthen our love. It is in reward for this constant battle out of love for God and our neighbour, for this firmness, for this fiery, stubborn, constant, invisible war against the sub-celestial spirits of evil, that God weaves the shining heavenly crowns for the wrestlers of love for God and their neighbour. In this respect holy ascetics, known as the Holy Fathers, are worthy of thousands of crowns. They, out of love for God, forsook the world and all that is in the world; they went away into desert, uninhabited places, and there, shut up in their cells, they spent all their life in thinking of God, in prayer, in renouncing their own will, in fasting, watching, labouring, and in doing great deeds for the love of God, enduring during their whole life the assaults of the opposing forces, endeavouring by every means to shake their faith and trust in God, and especially their love for Him. To fight, for the love of God, against our own flesh and the Devil—that crafty, mighty, and evil enemy—not for some hours, days, and months, but for many years, sometimes sixty or seventy—is not this worthy of crowns? And what, in comparison with these

ascetics, or Holy Fathers, are men living in the world, falling so often into sin even without being assaulted, and defeated by their own flesh without even being attacked? What in comparison to holy ascetics are worldly men, living in accordance with their own will, in luxury, in the pleasures of every kind, gorgeously apparalled and living delicately,[1] given over to pride, ambition, envy, hatred, avarice, irritability, wrath, revenge, amusements, fornication, drunkenness—to all possible vices, although not all in the same person? They are caught alive, without any resistance, in the power of the Devil, and therefore he does not attack them, but leaves them long entangled in his nets in the peace and self-forgetfulness that precede death.

Remember the words of the Scripture: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."[2] People offend you, irritate you, breathe contempt and malice against you; do not repay them in the same way, but be gentle, meek, and kind, respectful and loving towards those very persons who behave unworthily to you. If you are agitated yourself, and speak excitedly, rudely, contemptuously—that is, unlovingly—then you will be vanquished yourself, and those who offend you will have the right to say, "Physician, heal thyself,"[3] or "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? . . . First cast out the beam out of thine own eye."[4] Do not wonder, then, if the affronts of those who offend you are often repeated, for they will notice your weakness and will irritate you intentionally. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."[5] Show the one who offends you that he has not offended you, but himself; pity him heartily for being so easily overcome by his passions—for being spiritually sick; and the more rude and irritated he is, the more hatred he nourishes towards you, the more meekness and love you must show him. Then you will surely conquer him. Good is always stronger than evil, and therefore always conquers. Remember also that we are all weak, are very easily overcome by passions, and therefore be meek and indulgent to those who sin against you, knowing that you yourself often suffer from the same infirmity as your brother. Forgive those who trespass against you, so that God may forgive your trespasses, incomparably greater than the trespasses of others against you. Be always calm, lofty in spirit, unsuspicious, firm, simple, and kind-hearted, and you will always triumph over your enemies. "He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee."[6]

[1] St. Luke vii. 25. [2] Romans xii. 21. [3] St. Luke iv. 23.
[4] St. Matthew vii. 3, 5. [5] Romans xii. 21. [6] Proverbs ix. 7, 8.

Sometimes the enemy uses his wiles against us in such a manner that when we see any sin or vice in our brother, or in society, he strikes our heart with indifference and coldness and reluctance, or rather with shameful cowardice, to say a firm, accusatory word against the iniquity, to break the horn of the sinner. Christ, my King! give me apostolic zeal and the fire of the Holy Ghost in my heart, so that I may ever boldly rise up against insolent vice, especially against the vice that corrupts many; and may I not spare anyone, both for the sake of their own salvation and that of the rest of Thy people, in order that they should not be seduced, seeing the overflow of vice, and that they should not themselves fall! "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea,"[1] "For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost."[2]

When the foolish thought of counting up any of your good works enters into your head, immediately correct your fault and rather count up your sins, your continual and innumerable offences against the All-merciful and Righteous Master, and you will find that their number is as the sand of the sea, whilst your virtues in comparison with them are as nothing.

When your heart is struck by avarice, say to yourself: "My life is Christ, the Beloved of all. He is my inexhaustible wealth, my inexhaustible food, my inexhaustible drink. Our blind flesh dreams of finding life in food and in money, and bears ill-will against those who deprive it of these material means of life. But be firmly persuaded that your life is not money and food, but mutual love for the sake of love for God. Remember that God is Love, uniting all things animated by the laws of love, and bringing forth life from the union of love.

When praying, keep to the rule that it is better to say five words from the depth of your heart than ten thousand words with your tongue only. When you observe that your heart is cold and prays unwillingly, stop praying and warm your heart by vividly representing to yourself either your own wickedness, your spiritual poverty, misery, and blindness, or the great benefits which God bestows every moment upon you and all mankind, especially upon Christians, and then pray slowly and fervently. If you have not time to say all the prayers, it does not matter, and you will receive incomparably greater benefit from praying fervently and not hurriedly than if you had said all your prayers hurriedly and without feeling: "I had rather speak five words

[1] St. Matthew xviii. 6. [2] St. Matthew xviii. 11.

with my understanding than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue."[1] But it would, of course, have been very well had we been able to say these ten thousand words in prayer with due understanding and feeling. The Lord does not forsake those who labour for Him and who stand long before Him; for with what measure they mete, He will measure to them again, and He will reward them for the abundance of the sincere words of their prayer by sending into their souls a corresponding abundance of spiritual light, warmth, peace, and joy. It is well to pray long and continually; but "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given."[2] It is better for those who are not capable of long prayers to say short prayers, but with a fervent spirit.

In the perpetual miracle of the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the true Body and Blood of Christ united with His Divinity and soul, I see the miracle of the perpetual quickening of man by the divine breathing, and of his creation into a living soul. It is written: "And man became a living soul,"[3] but upon the Holy Altar the bread and wine, after their transubstantiation become not only a living soul, but a quickening spirit.[4] And this is all accomplished before my eyes; and I experience it both with my soul and my body, feeling it vividly. My God! How terrible are the mysteries which Thou createst! Of what unspeakable Mysteries hast Thou made me the witness and partaker! Glory to Thee, my Creator! Glory to Thee, Creator of the Body and Blood of Christ!

Even the saints of God were at times seized with diabolical despair and despondency. What, therefore, can we sinners expect? O, the enemy often wounds us by the wrath, humiliation, and cruel despondency of the heart! We must continually turn to God and be every moment with Him, in order that we may not be besieged with the wrath and despondency of the enemy. There are other means besides of escaping from them —the broad way of the world; only if you give yourself up to worldly pleasures, despondency will leave you for a time, at least while the pleasures last. But afterwards you will be captivated by these pleasures; they will become a necessity to you, and you will find comfort and joy in them, and in them alone; but may God preserve every Christian from finding his only way of escape from the despondency of the Devil through such means! It is better to walk in the narrow path, to patiently bear despondency, and to seek frequent help and deliverance from the Lord Jesus Christ, Who always rejoices

[1] 1 Corinthians xiv. 19.
[2] St. Matthew xix. 11, 12.
[3] Genesis ii. 7.
[4] 1 Corinthians, xv. 45.

those labouring for their salvation for His sake, than to enter on the broad and smooth way of the world and purchase there, by means of the pleasures of the flesh, freedom from the spirit of despondency. By means of this spirit of despondency the enemy has driven many from the narrow path of salvation on to the broad, smooth path which leads to destruction.

You are praying, your prayer is successfully accomplished, and you have inward proof that the Lord hears it and deigns to receive it favourably; your thoughts are at peace, you feel lightness and sweetness in your heart; but at the end of your prayer, through some slight infirmity of your heart and thoughts, a heavy burden falls on your heart, a weakening fire, and you feel an extreme difficulty in praying, and even an aversion to it, instead of the former lightness and inclination to prayer. Do not despair, friend; these are only the snares of the enemy, who loves to mock at us, especially at the end of our pious employment, so that we may fall into despondency and consider all our previous labours in the holy work lost. Learn from this in future not to extinguish your spirit even for a moment during your prayer; pray in spirit and truth, unremittingly, and not flattering the Lord during prayer by one single word—that is, not pronouncing a single word feignedly, hypocritically; let your prayer be only the expression of truth, the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost, and do not let it serve by a single word the enemy's lie, nor be in any way the organ of the Devil. And to release your soul from his heavy load and to extinguish his fire, pray fervently to God, heartily confessing your fault before Him—your hypocrisy during prayer—and you will obtain relief and peace. Do not hurry; say and do everything calmly. You will succeed. It is the enemy who hurries and disturbs us, for there is no sense in confused hurry.

"Our Father! Thy kingdom come." The Lord reigns everywhere, in the whole visible world (being in every place) and in all the angelic hosts. He also reigns by his infinite Power and Truth over the spirits of evil, and over evil and unrighteous men. Some of them He has bound in everlasting chains of darkness for judgment at the great day, and others he punishes in various ways in this life, and will punish in the future life with inextinguishable fire. But He, the Truth, does not reign in demons and in unrighteous men by His truth, because falsehood is in them; He does not reign in them by His love, because malice is in them; He does not reign in the unrighteous by faith, neither by hope, but He reigns in them by the strict fulfilment of His laws. "Why

call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"[1] "Keep My commandments."[2] He reigns in every action of my body and soul, even in the smallest (for instance, in speech), for my body obeys His laws in feeding, repose, sleep, growth, and walking, and both thought and word are formed and move in accordance with His laws; but He does not always reign in my heart, in the inclinations of my heart and in my free-will. I frequently incline to evil and do evil, instead of the good offered to me. I often oppose Him and His laws. I am often incredulous, unbelieving, selfish, proud; I often despise others, envy others, am avaricious, covetous, sensual, gratifying my sinful flesh in every way; ambitious, impatient, irritable, slothful, doing few or no good works at all, and if any, more from a concurrence of favourable circumstances than from the free inclination and tendency of my heart; I do not pity those who suffer, as members of the one body of the Church—in a word, the Lord does not always reign in me by thoughts, feelings, and acts of faith, hope, and love.

We must pray that we may be constantly and firmly assured in our hearts that everything we have—both of soul and body, in prosperity and adversity, and all our possessions as well as all the circumstances of our life—come from God, from His Power, and not from nature, or chance, or from ourselves. If you cease praying to God, you will soon forget your Benefactor, Creator, and Lord, and in forgetting Him you will fall into every evil. Therefore, you see that prayer always brings you real benefit.

Both the spiritual and bodily powers of a man increase and become perfected and strengthened by their exercise. By exercising your hand in writing, sewing or knitting, you will accustom it to such work; by frequently exercising yourself in composition you will learn to write easily and well; by exercising yourself in doing good works or in conquering your passions and temptations, you will in time learn to do good works easily and with delight; and with the help of God's all-active grace you will easily learn to conquer your passions. But if you cease writing, sewing, knitting, or if you only do so seldom, you will write, sew, and knit badly. If you do not exercise yourself in composition, or do so very seldom, if you live in the material cares of life only, it will probably become difficult for you to connect a few words together, especially upon spiritual subjects: the work set you will seem to you like an Egyptian labour, if you cease praying, or pray seldom; prayer will be oppressive to you. If you do not fight against your passions, or only do so seldom and feebly, you will find it very difficult

[1] St. Luke vi. 46. [2] St. John xiv. 15.

to fight against them, you will often be conquered by them; they will give you no rest, and your life will be poisoned by them, if you do not learn how to conquer these evil, inward enemies, that settle in your heart. Therefore labour and activity are indispensable for all. Life without activity is not life, but something monstrous—a sort of phantom of life. This is why it is the duty of every man to fight continually and persistently against the slothfulness of the flesh. God preserve every Christian from indulging it! "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."[1] "Unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."[2]

A man who is wrathful with us is a sick man; we must apply a plaster to his heart—love; we must treat him kindly, speak to him gently, lovingly. And if there is not deeply-rooted malice against us within him, but only a temporary fit of anger, you will see how his heart, or his malice, will melt away through your kindness and love—how good will conquer evil. A Christian must always be kind, gracious, and wise in order to conquer evil by good.

If anyone has offended you, do not bear malice, and when he who has offended you looks kindly upon you and turns to speak to you, do not let your heart incline to evil, but talk pleasantly and good-humouredly to him, as if nothing had happened between you; learn to conquer evil by good, malice by kindness, meekness, and humility. Do not say in your heart to him who has offended you: "What! he speaks to me, after having offended me, counting his offence against me as nothing! I do not consider him worthy of speaking to me; I reject, despise him; let him learn what it is to offend me." Do not be proud and bear malice. Do not say thus, lest the Lord be angered by your hard-heartedness.

All the material world is as nothing before God; only spiritual beings—that is, angels and men—are something. Only those creatures have a lasting existence who are near to God, and have His image and likeness; the remainder pass away like shadows—"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."[3]

We must always remember that the Devil is continually trying to choke our soul with the dust of hell, of which there is already too much within us, and which is small and various; and

[1] Galatians v. 24. [2] St. Matthew xxv. 29. [3] St. Matthew xxiv. 35.

thus, whether your heart be obscured by animosity, or impatience, or irritability, or by grudging your material possessions to your brother or yourself—that is, avarice—or by love of gain, or love of money, or by the quarrelsome and offensive words of others, or by despondency and despair, or by envy, doubt, or incredulity, or by open unbelief, or by vanity, or by slothfulness in prayer or in any good work, and in general in the performance of your duty, say to yourself with firm assurance : "This is the dust of the Devil; this is the darkness of hell." By faith and hope in the Lord, by continual watchfulness over yourself, you will be able, with God's help, to escape from this dust and darkness. "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."[1]

All my happiness and unhappiness are contained in the thoughts and inclinations of my heart. If the thoughts and inclinations of my heart are in accord with God's truth or with the will of my God, then I am at rest, filled with divine light, joy, and blessedness; if not, I am uneasy, filled with spiritual, soul-corrupting darkness, heaviness, and despondency. If I completely change the false, impious thoughts and inclinations of my heart into true ones, pleasing to God, then I again obtain rest and blessedness.

My neighbour is a being with equal rights as myself, a man, like me also made after the image of God; and as he is the same as I am I must love him as I love myself. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,"[2]—therefore I must watch over him as over my own flesh and blood, behave lovingly, gently, and kindly to him, forgiving him his thoughts as I should willingly forgive myself my own, as I long for forgiveness or indulgence from others towards my own weaknesses—that is, that other people should not even notice them, as though they did not exist, or that they should notice them gently, kindly, pleasantly, and benevolently.

In order to communicate of the life-giving Sacrament with undoubting faith and to vanquish all the wiles, all the calumnies of the enemy, represent to yourself that that which is received by you from the Cup is "He Which is"—that is, alone existing. If the disposition of your thoughts and of heart is such, then by receiving the Holy Mysteries you will obtain peace, joy, and new life, and will recognise in your heart that the Lord truly and essentially dwells within you, and you in the Lord. This is from experience.

[1] 1 John v. 18. [2] St. Matthew xxii. 39.

In praying to Our Lady, you call Her an abyss of mercies and bounties. Try yourself to be like Her, as far as lies in your power, in mercy and bountifulness in regard to those who have need of your mercy and bounties. Do not be angry with them, do not despise them, but love them the more they require your help. Consider their position clearly and soberly according to the teaching of the Gospel, often putting yourself in their place—and our Lady will multiply Her mercies upon you.

Your words are unequal : some vivify, and others slay your soul, or, perhaps, that of your neighbour. Therefore, it is said : "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt."[1] "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."[2]

The incorporeal enemy enters the heart of man through satiety and drunkenness—this can be felt by anyone who is observant. This is the reason why, with the growth of drunkenness, the inclination to drunkenness increases so terribly (because the power of the enemy over the man increases)—this is why you notice in drunkards a power involuntarily drawing them to satisfy their passion or their inward craving for wine. The enemy is in the hearts of these unhappy people. How can the demon of drunkenness be driven out? By prayer and fasting. The enemy enters the hearts of men because they have given themselves up to a carnal mode of life—to gluttony, and because they do not pray. It is, therefore, natural that he can be driven out from them by opposite means—that is, by prayer and fasting.

What would it have been if God's preventive grace had not been bestowed upon us; if it did not unexpectedly, suddenly embrace all our being after we have sinned, and incline our hearts to repentance and tears? What if it had been left to us to obtain it by our own efforts only? How accursed would we men then have been! Few, very few, could have been delivered from the burden of their sins, for our nature is slothful in exerting itself to effort, especially in the spiritual life; and without help, without powerful facility and the delights of spiritual labours, it would have abandoned them, and would have thrown aside the work of its salvation. But now God, the Most Wise and Merciful Father, sometimes lightens and sweetens our spiritual burden, sometimes makes it heavier for our trial, to teach us patience, and to weaken our crafty, destructive flesh, wisely changing the one by the other; and the work of our salvation,

[1] Colossians iv. 6. [2] Ephesians vi. 29.

thank God, is thus always made possible—not too difficult, and very often pleasant to us.

How inexpressibly sad it is to see that on the Lord's festivals the enemy collects his tax—and an exceedingly great one it is—from Christians! And the greater the festival the heavier the tax that Christians pay the enemy; for what do we see on the festivals? Perfect idleness, unbridled passions, brawls, profligacy, thefts, amusements. My God! What gratification of the flesh! What zealous service to the Devil! Are these people really Christians, redeemed by the precious Blood of the Son of God? Are we living in Christian times and not in Pagan ones? Are these men communicants of the life-giving Sacrament? Are these the same people who frequent God's temple and pray to the Lord together with us? If they are, then for what purpose do they go to church? Evidently only from habit, and not from any attachment of a thankful heart to Christ the Saviour. Evidently they have not prayed to God; they have not drawn near to Him with their heart, but only with their lips—if they have done so at all—and thus have not entered into the spirit of the festival; in general, they do not understand the nature and the object of Christian festivals, and do not participate in them as children participate in the family festivals of their parents. How wicked are the children of that loving, good, and holy Mother, the Church! The Mother is holy—the children are sinful; the Mother is spiritual—the children are carnal; the Mother is heavenly—the children are earthly; the Mother desires to give her children eternal, spiritual blessings, instead of corruptible and transitory ones; and the children reject them and choose for themselves earthly, sinful, passing pleasures. However, besides drunkards and men given over to various vices on festivals, we meet oftener still people who have not been to church (and do not even know that it is a festival, because they have never thought about it). For such people there is only one festival—the festival of the flesh. Ah! how long will it be before we priests rise up against all the disorders that take place on the Lord's festivals? Which of God's priests will have the zeal of Elias, Phinehas, Isaiah, or Jeremiah, in order to rise up in the power of the Holy Ghost against all these disorders on the Lord's festivals in the new Israel, in order to use all their powers, all their life for the glory of God—to uproot such laxity of morals amongst Christians? Lord! When shall we duly keep holy Thy festivals? When shall we comfort our holy Mother the Church by obedience to her ordinances? When shall we be imbued with her spirit? How long shall we begin the celebration of the great saving events of the Orthodox faith with the spirit and end them with the flesh? How long shall the enemy mock at the members

of Christ, which Christians are? How long shall men of other faiths and religions point at us and say: "Look, these are the Christians who call themselves Orthodox. Look how they live! What sort of faith can they have in their hearts? What knowledge of their religion can they have? What kind of priests must they have? How badly they must teach the people religion! How little can they explain to them the meaning of the festivals, their object, and the purpose for which they were instituted! How little can they teach them to live according to the faith! My God! What a reproach to our Orthodox faith and to us pastors! And yet, perhaps, is not what they say of us pastors just? It is a great deal our fault that Christians do not spend the festivals as they ought. We do not unmask them, do not forbid them; we do not implore them with all forbearance and instruction to spend the festivals, and in general to live in a more Christian-like manner. We do not speak strongly enough against idleness, drunkenness, profligacy; we do not thunder in God's Church, in God's words, against these vices, which have taken such a terrible hold of Christians. We do not always exclude from the Holy Cup, as an example to others, those persons who are known for their drunkenness and adultery, and we thus allow these contagious and abominable vices to spread further and further; or at confession we impose too light penances upon those who deserve the severe punishment of the Church, and we do not watch as we should the fulfilment of even those penances which we lay upon them. Then, Righteous God! neither the pastors nor the flock can justify themselves before Thee. "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."[1] What will it come to at last with the existing disorder of our life? Iniquity spreads over the earth; the kingdom of the enemy grows wider. Thy Kingdom diminishes; there are but few of Thy chosen in whose hearts Thou resteth. Many are the slaves of the Devil, in whose hearts the destroyer from time immemorial dwells like a thief. What wilt Thou do unto us, Lord? The blood of Thy testament cries out from the earth, but the voice of Thy Gospel does not penetrate into the hearts of Christians. Thy commandments are neglected, the Church's ordinances are trampled under foot. What wilt Thou do unto us, O Lord? Lord! send zealous workers into Thy vineyard, who "seek not their own,"[2] but who seek Thee, Christ. Give them the zeal of the prophets, the power and wisdom of the Apostles, so that they may day and night unwearyingly labour in the fields of the hearts of men.

It is said that we soon grow weary of praying. Wherefore?

[1] Romans iii. 12. [2] 1 Corinthians xiii. 5.

Because we do not vividly represent to ourselves the Lord, Who is at our right hand.[1] Look upon Him unceasingly with the eyes of your heart, and then, even if you stand praying all night, you will not grow weary. What do I say—all night? You will be able to stand thus praying two and three nights without growing weary. Remember the Stylites. They stood for many years in a prayerful disposition of soul on pillars or columns, and mastered their flesh, which was the same as yours, and which was also inclined to slothfulness. And you feel oppressed by a few hours' public prayers, even by one hour's prayers.

"Charity thinketh no evil."[2] To think evil is the work of the Devil: it is the Devil in the man who makes him think evil. Therefore, do not have any ill-feeling in your heart against your friend, and do not think evil, lest you become united to the Devil. "Overcome evil with good"[3]—that is, the evil which you see or suspect. Your spiritual wisdom and your exploit of Christian love consist in this.

"Our Father which art in heaven!" What an elevating, touching, soul-stirring spectacle it is when these words are pronounced from the depths of the soul, truthfully, with one heart and mouth, either by a numerous congregation in church, or in the family circle, or in an assembly of school children, or in a company of soldiers! What an elevating spectacle it is when one sees that these words are realised in the people's very lives, when all of them have a feeling of brotherly love towards each other, and live peaceably, the younger obeying the elder, the less wise the wiser, rendering each other their due, esteeming each other, "in honour preferring one another."[4] What a truly heavenly sight it is when, before sitting down to table, the numerous and various members of a family with one heart and mouth say: "Our Father," acknowledging the one Heavenly Father as the All-Holy King, desiring the fulfilment of His will alone upon earth, recognising Him alone as the Nourisher of all! What an elevating sight it is when the master of the household ascribes the blessings of food and drink, not to himself, but to God, esteeming His gifts as common to all; when he makes himself equal with all the others, as though he himself were being regaled, and not regaling others! But what a striking and comforting spectacle it would be if the whole earth, all peoples, "with one heart and mouth," were to exclaim: "Our Father which art in heaven! Hallowed be Thy name"—in us all! "Thy Kingdom come"—as it was

[1] Psalm xvi. 8. [2] 1 Corinthians xiii. 5. [3] Romans xii. 21.
[4] Romans xii. 10.

in the beginning, before the Fall. "Thy Will be done"—Thy merciful and perfect Will, as it is in heaven—eternally so on the earth, and may no self-will reign! "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses," and so on. What would it be if all had such a mode of thought and desire! But some day this will be, for the time will come when all those living upon the earth shall be one fold and have one Shepherd.[1]

The minds of the angels cannot grasp and cannot sufficiently marvel at the wisdom, mercy, and omnipotence which the Lord has manifested to us in His Incarnation from the Most Holy Virgin Mary. "All angelic nature wonders at this great act of Thine Incarnation, beholding the unapproachable God in approachable man."[2] Glory to Thy mercy! Glory to Thy bountifulness! Glory to Thy wisdom! Glory to Thy power! Through His Incarnation the Lord has clearly taught us all the mysteries of faith, which were not known, or but little known, in the Old Testament. Through His Incarnation we, accursed sinners, have been deemed worthy of the Communion of His Most Pure Body and Blood, and are thus united to Him in the closest manner; we dwell in Him and He in us. Through His Incarnation the Most Holy Virgin has become our All-Powerful Intercessor and our protection from sins, disasters, and misfortunes, praying for us day and night, our Queen and Lady, Whose power no visible and invisible enemies can withstand, and our very Mother by grace, in accordance with the words of Christ on the Cross to His disciple St. John: "Behold thy Mother!" —and to Her: "Behold Thy son!"[3] Glory to Thy bountifulness, Lord!

How we debase our God-like immortal soul by attaching ourselves to the perishable, tarnishable, fleeting glitter of gold and silver, and by averting our gaze from the higher eternal, all-rejoicing light, or by attaching ourselves to corruptible sweetness that soon passes away, and is harmful and weakening both to soul and body, and turning away our gaze from the eternal, spiritual sweetness; from the sweetness of the intuition of God, or to vain earthly glory, turning away our eyes from the glory of the higher heavenly calling: from the glory of God's children, the heirs of the eternal Kingdom of God. O, earthly vanity! O, attachment to worldly things! Look upwards, Christian!

The greatest good of this present and of the future life is God, eternally living, all-perfect, all-good. He who has

[1] St. John x.16. [2] Acathistos Condakion ix. [3] St. John xix. 26, 27.

acquired this good, who has it in his soul, is the happiest of men. Everything else earthly, worldly, and regarded as good is vanity and emptiness. That which is around me or upon me does not constitute myself; even my flesh, with which I am clothed, and of which I consist, as a portion of my earthly being, does not constitute my real self.

What is signified by the words: "whose praise is not of men, but of God"?[1] To whom is this praise due? To him who inwardly, in his heart, works for God, who does everything conscientiously, and does not care for the opinion of men or for human glory. But we seek the praise of men, and not that of God, Who is the God of glory. We seek earthly rewards, crosses and decorations, etc.

Why did the Holy Cross appear in the heavens to the Emperor Constantine? In order to show that our Lord Himself, also all the Apostles and all the army of martyrs, entered into glory through the Cross; that the Cross is invincible victory; that as the Devil was vanquished by means of the Cross, so likewise all the enemies of the Cross of Christ or of Christians will be vanquished by the Cross; also that the Devil acts through the persecutors of the Christians, and must be conquered by means of the Cross; and that the persecuted Christians are members of Christ, soldiers of Christ, who are always under the protection of Christ the Lord and His Cross.

"Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more."[2] Experience proves that sins and passions destroy the health of the soul and the body, whilst victory over the passions affords heavenly tranquillity and health both to the soul and the body. Conquer the many-headed hydra of sin—and you will be made whole. Preserve tranquillity of spirit; do not be disturbed, do not be irritated by any opposition, offences, negligences, injustices—and then you will always enjoy spiritual and bodily health. Emotions, disturbance, and the fire of various passions produce in us a multitude of maladies both of mind and body.

In order to rule others, we must first learn to rule ourselves; in order to teach others, we must acquire knowledge ourselves. If I do not know how to control myself, if there is not in me the spirit of self-command, the spirit of meekness, holiness, love and righteousness, then I am a bad director. If I am the sport of every kind of passion, it is better for me not to undertake to rule others, so as not to do greater harm than good, both to myself and to them.

[1] Romans ii. 29. [2] St. John v. 14.

The Lord is life in my death, strength in my weakness, light in my darkness, joy in my sorrow, boldness in my faint-heartedness, tranquillity in my agitation, obedience in my prayer, glory in my dishonour, and deliverance from my dishonour. Wonderfully, mightily, and quickly does He protect and save me in my misfortunes and distresses, and from the seductions of the passions. When I call upon Him to save me, the invisible enemies flee from me, after the evil they have wrought within me, and I sensibly recognise the saving right hand of my God, my Saviour, upon me. Glory and thanks to the Shepherd and Visitor of my soul!

When you stand praying, burdened with many sins and overpowered with despair, begin to pray with hope, with a fervent spirit, and remind yourself that "the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered!"[1] When you remember with faith this action of the Spirit of God within us, then tears of emotion will flow from your eyes, you will feel in your soul peace, sweetness, justification, "and enjoy in the Holy Ghost,"[2] and you will cry in your heart, "Abba, Father!"

God's omnipresence is in space and thought—that is, God is everywhere, both in respect to space and in respect to thought; wheresoever I may go, either in the body or in thought, everywhere I meet God, and everywhere God meets me.

When praying, we must believe in the power of the words of the prayer, in such a manner as not to separate the words from the deeds they express; we must believe that the deeds follow the words, as the shadow follows the body, for the word and the deed of the Lord are indivisible, "for He commanded and they were created."[3] And you must likewise believe that that which you say in the prayer, for which you have asked, will be done. You have praised God, and God has received your praise. You have thanked God, and God has received your thanks as a spiritual fragrance. It is our misfortune that we have little faith, and separate the word from the deed, as the body from the soul, as the form from the contents, as the shadow from the body—that during prayer, as in life, we are "sensual, having not the Spirit,"[4] and therefore our prayers are fruitless.

"Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually,"[5] is said of the Temple; *there*, that is, chiefly in the hearts of those assisting and praying in the Temple, for the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands. How comforting it is to read

[1] Romans viii. 26. [2] Romans xiv. 17. [3] Psalm cxlviii. 5.
[4] Jude i. 19. [5] 1 Kings ix. 3.

these words of the wise King Solomon! The eyes of the Master in God's temple are turned upon each of us, His heart is turned to each of us! Is it possible to require greater nearness? The Master's very heart is turned to me. Sometimes you stand face to face with another man and converse with him, but his heart is not turned towards you, and is occupied with something else; whilst here God's heart is wholly turned to you, with all its love, all its mercy, and according to your faith. He is ready to pour all His bounties upon you.

When we call upon the Saints in prayer, if we pronounce their names from the heart, it already means that we bring them near our heart itself. Therefore ask their prayers and intercession undoubtingly for yourself. They will hear you, and will speedily lay your prayers before the Lord, in the twinkling of an eye, for He is omnipresent and omniscient. When the Oblation you call in prayer upon the Lord Jesus Christ, or upon His Most pure Mother and the Saints, or when you commemorate the living or the departed, then the portion taken from the Bread, that has been offered, represents, and as if replaces by itself the Lord, or His Most-pure Mother, or some particular Saint, or many Saints conjointly; also the living or the departed commemorated, while the name thought of represents and replaces by itself the soul of the being invoked or commemorated. Thus, in a small form, on our lips and in our hearts, the beings of the higher and lower worlds are reflected, and all this through faith, by the Holy Ghost, who alone is being everywhere and filling everything.[1]

When praying, I firmly believe (1) that God alone is and fills everything, and that He is therefore at my right hand; (2) that I am His image; (3) that He is an abyss of mercy, the Source of every mercy, and that He Himself has authorised me to pray to Him.

The Lord fills all creation, which before Him is "as a drop of the morning dew that falleth down upon the earth," as "a little grain of the balance,"[2] keeping it down to the smallest blade of grass and grain of dust in His Right Hand, and not being limited either by the greatness or smallness of things created: exists in infinity, entirely filling it, as a vacuum; for He is the only Being which exists, and therefore calls Himself "I Am that I Am"[3]—that is, I am that Which *is*.

[1] The English reader who is unacquainted with the liturgies of the Orthodox Church can refer to the translations of Neale, Richardson, Robertson, and others.
[2] Wisdom of Solomon xi. 22. [3] Exodus iii. 14.

However small matter may be, but as long as it only exists, the Lord, Who fills everything and upholds everything, must also exist; for how can it be possible that any matter should exist, and not the Lord, Who has created everything? It is absurd. Without Him not a single grain of dust can have its being if it is left to itself, if it is deprived of God's presence and omnipotence. "Without Him was not anything made that was made."[1]

That our union with God in the future world will come to pass, and that it will be for us the source of light, peace, joy, and beatitude, this we partly recognise by experience even in the present life. During prayer, when our soul is wholly turned towards God, and is united to Him, we feel happy, calm, easy, and joyful, like children resting on their mother's breast; or, I would rather say, we experience a sensation of inexpressible well-being. "It is good for us to be here."[2] Therefore struggle unremittingly to obtain future everlasting bliss, the beginning of which you know by experience even in the present life; but bear in mind that these beginnings are only earthly, imperfect, which we see now only "in part, as through a glass darkly."[3] How will it be with us then, when we shall indeed be *most truly* united to God, when the images and shadows shall pass away, and the kingdom of truth and vision will come? O! we must labour unceasingly all our life, until death, for future blessedness, for our future union with God.

You see how bright the sun and the stars are. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun"[4] from the inner immaterial light of God. Whenever the angels appear upon earth, they are almost always surrounded by light. Aspire to that enlightenment. Throw aside the works of darkness. We can raise our nature to communion with the Divine Nature; and God is the Light uncreated, surpassing every light that has been created.

Man! when I look upon you—upon your earthly feelings, upon your flesh—when I remember the day of your birth, and the days that followed of your childhood and growth, up till now, and when I afterwards transport my thoughts to the day of your death, and after that to the eternity, which is destined to you from the foundation of the world, then I do not know at what most to marvel—at your nothingness, or at the omnipotence and goodness of the Creator who has mercifully given you life, and will eventually clothe your corruptible and

[1] St. John i. 3.
[2] St. Luke ix. 33.
[3] 1 Corinthians xiii. 12.
[4] St. Matthew xiii. 43.

mortal body with immortality. My wonderment increases when I see that the Lord God, the Eternal King, gives you His Own Flesh and Blood, to partake of "in the same manner as, in the days of His Flesh," "He also Himself likewise took part of our flesh and blood,"[1] in order to give you eternal life.

The dead live. "God is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him."[2] The soul invisibly hovers round the body, and the places where it liked to dwell. If it died in sins, then it cannot help to free itself from their bonds, and is in great need of the prayers of the living, especially of those of the Church, the most holy Bride of Christ. Therefore let us pray earnestly for the dead. It is of great benefit to them; of more benefit than to the living.

When God looks mercifully upon earth-born creatures through the eyes of nature, through the eyes of bright, healthful weather, everyone feels bright and joyful. When there is a healthful breeze, there is wholesome air in all bodies and souls; but when a cold, damp, strong wind blows, then everyone feels oppressed in soul and body. Many earth-born creatures groan from maladies; many give themselves up to despondency and melancholy. So powerful and irresistible is the influence of nature upon mankind. And it is remarkable that those who are less bound by carnal desires and sweetnesses; who are less given up to gluttony; who are more moderate in eating and drinking, to them nature is more kindly disposed, and does not oppress them—at least, not nearly so much as those who are the slaves of their nature and their flesh. O! how clear it is that our life is in the Lord, and not in sensual things; how clear it is that the Lord is in everything "which worketh all in all."[3] In the air He is our breath; in food the satisfying of our hunger; in drink the quenching of our thirst; in clothing our raiment; in the dwelling our protection, warmth, and tranquillity; in sleep our rest; in pure, instructive, chaste, and edifying conversation our speech; in mutual love, our love. Lord, Master, our Creator and Benefactor, grant that we may always remember Thee at every moment of our life; that by Thee "we live and move and have our being;"[4] that we have life, breath, and everything from Thee. But let us also remember that if in all that has been enumerated we pervert God's laws, He becomes our grievous punishment. He will become our punishment even in the air, in food and drink; He will no

[1] Hebrews v. 7; ii. 14.
[2] St. Luke xx. 38.
[3] 1 Corinthians xii. 6.
[4] Acts xvii. 28.

longer be the satisfying of our hunger and the quenching of our thirst, but either our aversion from them or a sickness, as happens when, it is said, that food does no good to some person; in clothing or in the dwelling, our weakness and distress of mind; in sleep not rest, but uneasiness and fear; in speech, constraint; in wrongful love, the fiery torments. The sources of punishment usually appear in our sinful inclinations themselves. "Wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished."[1]

The truth and saving properties of our holy faith are clearly revealed by the fact that not a single Sacrament, not a single faithful prayer are left fruitless in us, but they bring and manifest their power from heaven upon our souls and bodies, cleansing our sins, and giving peace to our souls in accordance with the words of our Saviour: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;"[2] and delivering us from spiritual afflictions and bodily sicknesses! No, we never pray in vain to the Lord, or to the most holy Virgin, or to the angels and saints, but we receive all that we ask them for, and that tends to our salvation. Powers of healing and multifarious help constantly come to us from heaven. Our Lord is a Lord of manifold powers manifested upon us, and our God is the God of mercy and salvation. In like manner the ever-Virgin Mother of the incarnate God-the-Word, imitating the love to mankind of her Son and God, prays for us, and continually manifests her powers to believers. Feeling the continual all-saving powers revealed to us by the Mother of God, we call upon her: "At no time will we unworthy ones be silent, God-bearing One, to tell of thy mighty acts; for hadst thou not prayerfully interceded for us, who would have delivered us out of so many dangers?" . . . Or: "Show us thy power, as thou hast ever done. . . ." And we turn to Her in every affliction, need, and misfortune. The same applies to the angels and saints; when we call upon them they hear us, and by the grace of God afford us help.

The carnal man does not understand the spiritual blessedness that proceeds from prayer and virtue, and cannot comprehend even in a small degree what the blessedness in the next world will be. He does not know anything higher than earthly carnal happiness, and considers future blessings as imaginary visions. But the spiritual man knows by experience the blessedness of the virtuous soul, and foretastes future blessedness in his heart.

[1] Wisdom xi. 16. [2] St. Matthew xi. 28.

The more a man leads the spiritual life, the more he becomes spiritualised: he begins to see God in everything; the manifestation of His power and might in everything; he sees himself always and everywhere abiding in God, and depending from God even in the smallest matters. But the more a man leads the carnal mode of life, the more carnal he becomes: he does not see God in anything, not even in the most wonderful manifestations of His divine powers—he sees flesh and matter in everything, and nowhere, nor at any time, is God before his eyes.[1]

The Lord called Himself and is the "good Shepherd."[2] If you believe in His guidance, then you will understand by your heart that as a zealous shepherd when feeding his flock does not allow the sheep to disperse, but gathers them together, so also the Lord pastures our souls, not allowing them to wander in falsehood and sins, but gathering them on the path of virtue, and not allowing the mental wolf to steal and scatter them.

As the Devil is incomplex in his being, and in an instant by a single thought can wholly attach himself to us and enter into our heart, therefore we must likewise repulse him in an instant by a single powerful word from our heart, containing all the force of truth as a complete antidote against the falsehood of the enemy. This is what the Lord signified when He said: "Be ye therefore wise as serpents;"[3] that is, as this spiritual serpent is rapid, sure, falling upon us with infernal wisdom and planning when it is easiest for him to attack and overthrow us; looking out which are our weakest sides and habits, and then for the greater part striking surely. But at the same time, the Lord said: "Be harmless as doves;" that is, simple and guileless. Borrow from the serpent his wisdom only, but let your heart remain simple, pure, and uncorrupt. Be meek and humble as I am; do not give yourself up to wrath and irritability, for "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God;"[4] keep yourself pure from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit.

Our soul, as a spiritual, active being, cannot remain idle; it either does good or evil, one of the two; either wheat grows in it or tares. But as every good comes from God, and as the means of obtaining every good from God is prayer, those who pray fervently, sincerely, from the depths of their hearts, obtain from the Lord grace to do good, and, before all, the grace of faith; whilst those who do not pray, naturally remain without

[1] Psalm xxxvi. 2. [2] St. John x. 11. [3] St. Matthew x. 16. [4] James i. 20.

these spiritual gifts, voluntarily depriving themselves of them by their own negligence and spiritual coldness; and as the wheat of good thoughts, inclinations, intentions, and works grows in the hearts of those who labour and pray fervently to the Lord, so in the hearts of those who do not pray, the tares of every evil grow, smothering the small amount of good that has remained in them from the grace of baptism, chrism, and subsequent penitence and communion. Therefore, we must most carefully look after the field of our heart, lest the tares of evil, slothfulness, luxuriousness, self-indulgence, unbelief, avarice, envy, hatred, and others, should grow within it; we must daily weed the field of our heart—at least, at morning and evening prayers, and refresh it by salutary sighs, as by healthful winds, and water it with abundant tears, as by early and late rain. Besides this, we must by every means implant in the field of our heart the seeds of the virtues, faith, hope in God, and love for God and our neighbour, fertilise it by prayer, patience, good works, and not for a single hour remain in complete idleness and inactivity, for in times of idleness and inactivity the enemy zealously sows his tares. "While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way."[1] We must also remember that it is impossible to do good works without efforts. Since our voluntary falling into sin the kingdom of God cannot be taken otherwise than by "violence, and the violent take it by force."[2] Why is it that only the narrow way and narrow gate lead to life? Who makes the way of the chosen narrow? The world oppresses the chosen, the devil oppresses them, the flesh oppresses them; it is these that make our way to the kingdom of heaven narrow.

The Lord has brought my soul and body from nonentity into existence—so almighty is He! How can I possibly not believe in His omnipotence? What can I consider impossible to Him, I who myself was brought from nonentity into existence? What has God higher and more precious in the world than me—man? Am I not, before all, the greatest miracle of His omnipotence? I am received by God himself, into union with Him, I who am a little lower than the angels; I who, being united to Him through faith and purity of life, can myself work the miracles of God's omnipotence, for instance: I raise the dead like Elias and the Apostles. If the spirits of angels and the souls of men are brought by Him from nonentity into existence, then what animate or inanimate body could He not create? Further, if God Himself has become human flesh and soul without ceasing to be God, if He has done that which would be impossible for

[1] St. Matthew xiii. 25. [2] St. Matthew xi. 12.

us to do, then, after this, what can be impossible to Him? What is more infinite than this wonder? Thus has our God indeed shown and shows His omnipotence.

If the bodiless angels can take upon themselves a body, not a visionary, but a real one, having received the capability of doing this from God, then with what ease can the Lord Himself create a body for Himself. It may even be said that the creative power is natural to every animate being, by the gift of God the Spirit, the Creator of everything. Shall not, therefore, the Lord Himself who has given such laws to nature, with instantaneous facility, at a single sign, transform at His will, any substance into a body? Do not all bodies consist of formless inanimate matter? What unbelieving person will, after this, doubt the possibility of the transformation, for instance, of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, during the Divine liturgy? This is but an ordinary act of the God of wonders, after the fact of His having created flesh for Himself from the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary.

What can be firmer, more unchangeable and mightier than the word? By the word the world was created and exists; "upholding all things by the word of His power;"[1] and yet we sinners treat words so lightly, so negligently. For what do we show less respect than for the word? What is more changeable in us than the word? O, how accursed are we men! How inattentive we are to such precious things! We do not remember that by means of the word proceeding from a believing and loving heart, we may perform life-giving miracles for our own souls and for the souls of others; for instance, in prayer at Divine service; in sermons, at the celebration of the Sacrament! Christian! value every word; be attentive to every word; be firm in the word; trust in every word of God, and of the saints, as in the words of life. Remember that the word is the beginning of life.

We must also have the deepest respect for the word, because in one single word dwells the omnipresent one indivisible Lord who fills everything. Therefore it is said: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,"[2] for in one name, the Lord Himself, is contained the invisible Being, the everlastingly worshipped Unity.

When the Lord strikes you with sore affliction or sickness, or misfortune, then be assured that He will also truly send you consolation, and will afterwards bestow upon you the

[1] Hebrews i. 3. [2] Exodus xx. 7.

grace of peace, strength, and joy corresponding to your previous sufferings. For "the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will He keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."[1]

Looking upon the Saviour's cross, contemplate Love, crucified upon it for our salvation; and think, for what blessedness He has saved us, and from what torments He has redeemed us! He has snatched us from the jaws of the beast and has brought us to the Father! O love! O redemption! O terrors of everlasting torments! O indescribable, endless blessedness!

In saying "our Father" we should believe and remember that the Heavenly Father never forgets, and never will forget us, for, even, what good earthly father forgets and does not care for his children? "Yet will I not forget thee,"[2] says the Lord. "For your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."[3] Take these words to your heart. Remember that the Heavenly Father continually surrounds you with love and care, and is not called your Father without reason. Father is not an empty name without meaning and power, but a name full of meaning and power.

When you are saying your prayers—and especially if you have a rule of prayer according to a book—do not hurry from one word to another without feeling its truth, without laying it to your heart, but always strive to feel with your heart the truth of that which you say. Your heart will oppose this—sometimes by slothfulness and stony insensibility to that which you are saying, sometimes by doubt and unbelief, by a kind of inward fire and oppression, sometimes by distraction and deviation of the mind to earthly objects and cares, sometimes by the remembrance of the offences of your neighbour, and by a feeling of revenge and hatred towards him, sometimes by the representation of worldly pleasures, or the representation of pleasure derived from reading novels and, in general, worldly books. Do not be self-loving; conquer your heart, and offer it to God as an acceptable sacrifice: "My son, give Me thine heart,"[4] and your prayer will unite you to God and all heaven, and you will be filled with the Spirit, and the fruits of the Spirit: righteousness, peace, joy, love,

[1] Psalm ciii. 8-10. [2] Isaiah xlix. 15. [3] St. Matthew vi. 32.
[4] Proverbs xxiii. 26.

meekness, long-suffering, and hearty compunction. You want to finish your rule of prayer quickly, in order to give rest to your weary body? Pray fervently, and you will sleep the most peaceful, quiet, and healthy sleep. Do not hurry, then, nor say your prayers anyhow; by half-an-hour's prayer you will gain three whole hours of the soundest sleep. Are you hurrying to get to the place of your service or your work? Get up earlier; do not sleep so long; and pray fervently—you will thus obtain tranquillity, energy, and success in your work for the whole day. Is your heart impatient to go to vain, worldly matters? Master it; let its treasure be not earthly vanity, but God; teach your ears to attach itself through prayer to God, and not to worldly vanity, so that you may not be covered with shame in the day of sickness, and in the hour of death, like him who was rich in worldly vanity and poor in faith, hope, and love. If you do not pray as I have said, then you will neither prosper in life, nor in faith, nor in spiritual understanding.

The Lord Jesus Christ had not where to lay His head during His earthly life,[1] yet He had in Himself His own life and the life of all,[2] whilst rich men build themselves magnificent palaces and live in them; but, alas, with such brilliant surroundings they have not true life in their hearts, they cannot even enjoy their vanity; they feel dull and oppressed in their beautiful palaces, so that many rich men and high dignitaries would willingly exchange their palaces for the poor man's cottage if they could only acquire his peace of heart.

In order to be perfectly pleasing to God, we must also for His sake be perfectly indifferent to our flesh; for instance, when, during prayer, notwithstanding our slothfulness and strong inclination to sleep, we force ourselves not to yield to it, then we are indifferent to our flesh. The martyrs and ascetics had this perfect indifference for their flesh.

At the end of your morning and evening prayers in your home, call upon the Saints: Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Prelates, Martyrs, Confessors, Holy Fathers, the Ascetics, the Unmercenary, so that seeing in them the realisation of every virtue, you may yourself become the imitator of every virtue. Learn from the Patriarchs childlike faith and obedience to the Lord; from the Prophets and Apostles, the zeal for God's glory and for the salvation of the souls of men; from the Prelates, zeal to preach God's word, and in general to assist through the Scriptures, to the possible glorification of God's name, to the

[1] St. Matthew viii. 20. [2] St. John iii. 36; v. 26; xi. 25; xiv. 6.

strengthening of faith, hope, and love amongst Christians; from the Martyrs and Confessors, firmness for the faith and piety before unbelieving and godless people; from the Ascetics, to crucify your own flesh, with its passions and desires, to pray and think piously; and from the Unmercenary, not to love gain, and to give gratuitous help to the needy.

Do not neglect to uproot from the hearts of children the tares of sins, impure, evil, and blasphemous thoughts, sinful habits, inclinations, and passions; the enemy and the sinful flesh do not spare even children; the seeds of all sins are to be found in the children too; show them all the danger of sin on the path of life; do not hide sins from them lest through ignorance and want of comprehension they should be confirmed in sinful habits and attachments, which grow stronger and stronger and bring forth corresponding fruits when the children grow up.

The carnal man's entire life and occupations have a carnal tendency and carnal aim; his prayer is carnal, his learning and his teaching of others are carnal, his writings are carnal; at every step, in nearly every word, the carnal life appears. The carnal life manifests itself especially in everything relating to the man's appetites: here is the very seat of the carnal man. In proportion as the man by God's grace lays aside the carnal life, he begins to trample his carnal appetites under foot—he alters his food, ceases to live for insatiable appetite; gradually in his heart, faith, hope, and love begin to reign. Instead of eating, drinking, dress, riches, God, the soul, eternal life, eternal torment, occupy his thoughts and imagination. Instead of the love of money, of food, drink, dress, the luxury of his house and surroundings, love for God, for men, a longing to dwell with the Angels and Saints; instead of food and drink, hunger and thirst, and the diligent reading and listening to the Word of God and Divine service. Previously his enemies were those who hindered his outward well-being, now he bears privations with equanimity; previously he slept much and found pleasure in sleep, now he sleeps little and intentionally deprives himself of sweet sleep; previously he gratified the flesh in every way, now he mortifies it so that it may not rebel against the spirit.

When you see that anyone, through the efforts of the Devil, is wholly possessed with one single vain, earthly subject (*idée fixe*), deeply grieves about it, constantly speaks of it, and thereby vexes you, do not become irritated about it, but be firmly assured that it is a spiritual malady coming from the

enemy; be gentle and kind to the sick man, and immediately turn with calm, serene faith to God in prayer, and say the following to the holy Icon not made with human hands: "To Thy most pure Icon we bow down, O Good One, praying for forgiveness of our sins, Christ our God; for of Thine own will Thou didst condescend to ascend the Cross in flesh, and thereby to deliver Thy creatures from the yoke of the enemy. Therefore, we thankfully cry unto Thee: Thou, Our Saviour, hast filled all things with joy, Thou Who camest to save the world."[1]

Consider thyself also: the enemy sometimes tempts your patience too; his triumph is double if he succeeds in irritating you too: understand his wiles, and mock at them. When he exerts his violence against a person who is especially near to your heart, then your heart aches to hear his foolish words expressing the attachment of his heart to earthly things. Do not be depressed, do not despair, do not grieve, do not give way to anger, "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."[2] Call upon the Saviour: "Saviour, save us!" Do not be false to Him in any spiritual affliction, nor in any violence of the Devil and the passions. Remember that He Himself said: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."[3] The infinite power of the Lord is ever ready to come to our help; it is pleasing to the Lord of power and mercy to manifest His saving power in us, and to save us from our visible and invisible enemies. The more trivial the cause of the sorrow of the man's soul is, the more pitiable and deserving of compassion he is, for then we clearly see that the cause of it is—the Devil.

It is never so difficult to say from the heart, "Thy Will be done, Father," as when we are in sore affliction or grievous sickness, and especially when we are subjected to the injustice of men, or the assaults and wiles of the enemy. It is also difficult to say from the heart "Thy Will be done" when we ourselves were the cause of some misfortune, for then we think that it is not God's Will, but our own will, that has placed us in such a position, although nothing can happen without the Will of God. In general, it is difficult to sincerely believe that it is the Will of God that we should suffer, when the heart knows both by faith and experience that God is our blessedness; and therefore it is difficult to say in misfortune, "Thy Will be done." We think, "Is it possible that this is the

[1] The Vera Icon, which, according to Greek tradition, Jesus sent with an autograph letter, to Abgarus of Edessa.
[2] Galatians vi. 1. [3] Psalm l. 15.

Will of God? Why does God torment us? Why are others quiet and happy? What have we done? Will there be an end to our torments?" And so on. But when it is difficult for our corrupt nature to acknowledge the Will of God over us, that Will of God without which nothing happens, and to humbly submit to it, then is the very time for us to humbly submit to this Will, and to offer to the Lord our most precious sacrifice—that is, heartfelt devotion to Him, not only in the time of ease and happiness, but also in suffering and misfortune; it is then that we must submit our vain erring wisdom to the perfect Wisdom of God, for our thoughts are as far from the thoughts of God "as the heavens are higher than the earth."[1]

Let every man bring in sacrifice to God his Isaac, his only begotten, his beloved, his promised one (to whom peace and blessedness, not sufferings, are promised), and let him show God his faith and his obedience, so as to be worthy of God's gifts, which he already enjoys, or which he expects to enjoy.

In order to rightly understand the words of the Lord's prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," we must remember that this prayer was given to the Apostles, who asked the Lord to teach them how to pray; that it was given to them before the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, when Satan asked them of the Lord, that he might sift them as wheat.[2] At that time the Apostles were still weak, and might have fallen under temptation (like Peter); this is why the Saviour puts in their mouths the words, "Lead us not into temptation." But it is impossible to live without temptations of our faith, hope, and love: it is indispensable for the man himself that the secrets of his heart should be tested, so that he may himself see what he is and amend himself. Yes, temptations are necessary in order "that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed,"[3] that our firmness or weakness in faith may be revealed, as well as the knowledge or ignorance, the depravity or purity of our heart, its hope and trust in God or in earthly things; also whether we love ourselves and corruptible things, or God above all.

When I call to mind the Son of God, Who received human nature into union with His Godhead, and also the lives those live who call themselves Christians, then I am seized with fear and pity: fear because I anticipate the great wrath of God upon the careless, ungrateful, and evil-natured; pity because I see a great multitude of Christians voluntarily

[1] Isaiah lv. 8, 9. [2] St. Luke xxii. 31. [3] St. Luke ii. 35.

depriving themselves of the indescribable bliss of the future life, and casting themselves into eternal fire—into eternal torments.

Render all honour to every man, especially to the Christian, because of the fact that God deigned to receive human nature into the closest union with His Divinity, so that He became God-man. Therefore, looking upon any man, think, "The Lord Himself was in every respect similar to this man, excepting sin;" and if you know, or see, that he does not know this truth of the incarnation of the Son of God, and is leading an unworthy life, then teach and guide him. Also love every man as you love yourself, because he is another you, and is therefore called your neighbour in God's commandments: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."[1]

The carnal man considers the Christian's freedom as slavery; for instance, attending Divine service, fasting, preparation for the Sacrament, confession, communion, all the Sacraments, and does not know that all this is a requirement of his nature, a necessity for his spirit.

A proud man, at the time when other people are speaking of any other person's virtues, is wickedly afraid lest this person should be superior to him in virtues, and should eclipse him, for the proud man considers himself above all, and does not think it possible to find similar or higher virtues in others. The rivalry of others is a great misfortune to him.

When you are saying a prayer for all men, and not praying from your heart for all men, then your soul is oppressed, for God does not favour such prayer; but as soon as you begin to pray for all men from your heart, then you will immediately feel relieved, for the Lord listens mercifully to such prayers.

The Devil often seizes hold of our heart with his teeth. With what teeth? Incredulity, doubt, oppression, and every passion. Sometimes the enemy troubles us by the suspicion of the fidelity of our servants in relation to our property, and this especially happens when our hearts should be occupied exclusively with thoughts of God and the contemplation of heavenly things. In order to deliver yourself from such anxieties and afflictions, which proceed from the Devil, remember the words of the Holy Scripture: "The Lord is at

[1] Exodus xx. 16.

hand. Be careful for nothing."[1] Do not be uselessly anxious The Lord takes care of your property; you are not at home, but He is there for you, for He is everywhere present and fills all things: He speaks in the conscience of your servants and the members of your household. He tries the thoughts of their hearts at every time and every hour; He says to them inwardly, "Thou shalt not steal;" and He disturbs their hearts by fear and apprehension when they conceive the sinful intention of stealing anything. He will manifest His miraculous power over them, and will not allow them to steal. But besides this, you must learn to regard all earthly things as dross, and disdain them.

The Word is our Creator and our God. Every word of His is truth and deed. Such also should our own word be, for we are created after the image of God; likewise the word of all speaking creatures should be truth and deed (such was the word of good tidings of the Archangel to Zacharias, to the Virgin Mary); and thus it is also with the angels and Saints; but in the Devil, who fell away from God, only a shadow of thought remains, and his word is without truth, without the reality of the deed—a lie, a phantom; and as a truthful word, being an image of the God the Word, and being derived from Him, is life, so the lying word of the Devil, being his image, is death. Falsehood is necessarily death, for the death of the soul is naturally caused by that which has itself fallen from life into death.

One cannot eat and drink and smoke continually. One cannot turn human life into constant eating, drinking, and smoking (although there are men who do eat, drink, and smoke almost uninterruptedly); and thus the spirit of evil has turned life into smoking, and made the mouth, which ought to be employed in thanking and praising the Lord, into a smoking furnace. The less and lighter the food and drink you take, the lighter and more refined your spirit will become.

O ye of little faith! do not doubt in Mine omnipotence. I have created every soul and all flesh, and I am the God of spirits and of all flesh. "For the spirit shall come forth from Me, and every breath which I have created."[2] "I have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded."[3]

[1] Philippians iv. 5, 6.

[2] Isaiah lvii. 16. This is the exact translation of the Slavonic version. The English is as follows: "For the spirit should fail before Me, and the souls which I have made."

[3] Isaiah xlv. 12.

"Thou shalt do no murder." Amongst others, doctors murder by their ignorance of the sick man's illness when they prescribe him injurious medicines. Those also commit murder who will not have a doctor to attend them or another person who is ill and requires the doctor's help. Those commit murder who irritate a sick man to whom any irritation may be fatal—for instance, a consumptive person—and thus hasten his death. Those commit murder who, through avarice or any other bad reason, delay in affording the doctor's help to a sick person, or in giving bread to the hungry.

One meets with distorted hearts in some men. At the celebration of the sacraments they breathe unbelief and insensibility, moral impotency or mockery, disturbance, and diabolical fear! During the illness of those near to them one is also struck by their insensibility and even diabolical malignancy. They consider their sick brother as superfluous in the world, and inwardly think "There will be more room for me if he dies," not reflecting that every man—and they themselves—may perhaps die to-morrow, and not pitying the sufferer in their hearts as their own member.

An irritable and foolish man adapting any object to any particular use, and not being capable of assisting the matter by the sagacity of his mind, and seeing that the object does not serve him as he would wish it to, often grows angry, loses his temper, throws aside and sometimes breaks this object, as though it were an animate, intelligent being intentionally resisting his wishes. It may happen that something falls down; it catches in something else, which tears; the object does not move in the manner he desired; it does not fit into its right place; everything seems to take up arms against him, and he is ready to weep from vexation. But had a master-hand taken up the matter, then everything would have gone right. Why so? Because then a man possessing intelligence, judgment, and sagacity would have set to the work with all his soul. To what does the observation of our ordinary worldly behaviour with different objects lead me? To what thoughts? I see that the intellect, or the intelligent human spirit, reigns everywhere over matter, and that without the intellect nothing can be done by itself—for instance, not even normal motion. Equally, without the intellect, nothing can adapt itself to any particular purpose, or attain any particular purpose, for every purpose is attained by means of certain determined laws, and the laws proceed from the intellect. Now turn to the universe. From whence comes this wonderful order in soulless matter and in unintelligent animals? From whence this beauty, this miraculous transformation of formless and

lifeless matter into beautiful living things? From whence this adaptation to thousands of different purposes and such wise attainment, by simple means, of their purposes by things which of themselves cannot have any known purpose nor attain it? Who is this invisible Sovereign over matter? Who is this Mind, revealing His most wonderful wisdom in matter and in various animate creatures? Who is this eternal Artist and Architect invisibly producing His art before our eyes? He Who alone is the Creator of all—the Lord! I contemplate Thee with the eyes of my heart in every minute particle of space; Thou until now with Thy Son and Thy Holy Spirit invisibly workest all things. I embrace Thee, present in every place, with my heart; I worship Thee, glorify Thee, and praise Thee!

Those who give bread or money to the hungry regretfully, with an evil eye and dissatisfied heart, act in the same manner as if they were putting poison into their bread or their alms, though this poison is a spiritual, invisible one. We must give lovingly, with a respect for the person of our neighbour, willingly, gladly; for it is natural that love should rejoice when affording help to the beloved.

God preserve you from grudging the sacrifice of your material possessions to the Lord Himself, to His Most-pure Mother, or to any other of God's Saints, thus preferring matter to the spirit. Beware lest your property lead to your destruction. You ought to firmly believe that instead of corruptible blessings, the Lord or His Saints will bestow incorruptible ones upon you; instead of temporal blessings, eternal ones; for instance: spiritual light, the forgiveness of sins, the gifts of living faith, of firm hope and love unfeigned, of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost—which are infinitely above any material gifts. Lavish joyfully your possessions in sacrifice to the Lord and His Saints. If you send money for this purpose through anyone else's hands, be sure that it will reach its destination; and if people embezzle your sacrifice to the Lord, then the Lord your God will call such people to account, and not a single mite will be lost, but it will bring you a gift—proportionate to your faith and heart's disposition—from the Lord, who is the God of all gifts, especially to those who offer Him their heart's sacrifices.

God's Saints are represented in their inward actions as listening to the inward Guest, Who works within them—the Lord—venerating Him, smiling from inward sweetness and tenderness, and enjoying heavenly rest. "Ye are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."[1]

[1] 1 Peter ii. 25.

God created matter in order that it should change and be transformed in innumerable ways in accordance with the Creator's thought. The purpose of matter is to manifest diversely to creatures and in creatures His Omnipotence and mercy, that He may act beneficially through it upon animate creatures, and especially upon those who are reasonable and clothed with flesh.

Worthless is the charity of the man who bestows it unwillingly, because material charity is not his, but God's gift, whilst only the disposition of the heart belongs to him. This is why many charities prove almost worthless, for they were bestowed unwillingly, grudgingly, without respect for the person of our neighbour. So also the hospitality of many persons proves worthless because of their hypocritical vain-glorious behaviour to their guests. Let us offer our sacrifices upon the altar of love to our neighbour, with heart-felt affection : "for God loveth a cheerful giver." [1]

The enemy acts destructively upon men's hearts, amongst other ways, through outward nature, as upon Job—by means of winds, water, and fire. Houses are sometimes burnt down through the wiles of the enemy; houses are submerged and vessels sunk ; winds blow down and destroy buildings ; or else in wet weather, through damp and gases, the enemy uses his craft upon our inward parts, oppressing us with heaviness, and striking us with an apathetic coldness to everything true and holy. O, how many and diverse are the wiles of the prince of the powers of the air, and how difficult it is sometimes to distinguish them !

The corrupted man continually wishes to eat and drink, to continually satisfy his sight, hearing, smell, and feeling; carnal men satisfy themselves with dainty food and drink, fine sights, music, smoking, magnificent edifices, and outward splendour. But the adornment of holy objects raises our souls to God, and is therefore not only sinless, but holy and edifying, as also sacred singing, the fragrance of incense, the magnificence and splendour of the ornaments of the temple and all its vessels. All these, being destined to serve to the glory of God and to arouse pious feelings, are not sinful, but holy. But there, in the world, everything ministers to the carnal, corrupted man, and estranges from God. The corrupt heart seeks impure carnal sensations, and everything there satisfies it. The corrupt mind seeks knowledge corresponding to its corruption, and is there satisfied. The corrupt imagination and memory also seek images corre-

[1] 2 Corinthians ix. 7.

sponding to them, and are there satisfied. But we Christians are "new creatures,"[1] or "a chosen generation,"[2] a new people, "created in righteousness and true holiness[3] after God. We must divest ourselves of the old man and his works, and must fight against his desires and lusts.

When you are reading a long form of prayer aloud in the presence of a large concourse of people, then the enemy tries to disconcert your heart and to quench the words on your lips by the thought, that the people do not understand many words, and that it is a useless waste of time to read such prayers. This is evidently foolishness. For what of the Holy Ghost, the Instructor in all truth? Does He remain inactive, does He not enlighten all human hearts? Have you not yourself experienced the enlightenment of your heart by the Holy Ghost? Formerly you did not understand some of the words and expressions, and then suddenly the Holy Ghost opened your mind so that you might understand these hitherto incomprehensible words and expressions—and such a light suddenly enlightens your heart; be assured that the same also happens with others. Read with a steadfast heart, without any hurtful suspiciousness. Sow the seed—God will give the growth.

Many and various are the obstacles upon the narrow way: you wish to pray—the enemy oppresses you both spiritually and physically; you feel it your duty to write a sermon; you are oppressed by slothfulness; oppression is everywhere. The smoke of hell endeavours to darken and straiten your soul even when the Most Holy and terrible Sacrifice lies before you, when you communicate of It, and also at the time of the celebration of all the sacraments. The greater the Holy Office, the more violently and furiously the enemy attacks you.

God is goodness, He is like inexhaustible chrism; the spiritual world is the development of this goodness, like an ocean of fragrant chrism, the material world also. How can we not hope to obtain all good things from such goodness? The Lord in His goodness has diffused Himself into all creatures, like chrism, without having in any wise exhausted Himself.

At the approach of the great festivals you must be especially watchful over yourself. The enemy endeavours beforehand to chill the heart towards the subject of the event celebrated, so that the Christian should not honour it by the heartfelt consideration of its reality. He acts upon us either through the atmosphere, or through the food and drink we have taken, or through his

[1] 2 Corinthians v. 17. [2] 1 Peter ii. 9. [3] Ephesians iv. 24.

fiery arrows, plentifully darted at the heart and violently inflaming the entire man, at which time evil, impure and blasphemous thoughts occur to us, and we feel a hearty aversion to the subject of the solemnity. We must overcome the enemy by forcing ourselves to devout meditation and prayer.

When during prayer the enemy suggests within you a craving for food, despise this material, nervous irritation, strengthen your heart more powerfully by prayer, inflame it by faith and love, and say to the tempter the following words of the Lord: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."[1] Prayer is my best food, fortifying and enlightening both the soul and the body.

Sometimes the enemy acts through evilly-disposed persons; through proud ones—by humiliation and contempt; through fanatics—by unbelief, free-thought, and scoffing at sacred things; through cruel masters—by tyranny and torments; through gluttons—by the allurement of dainties, of over-eating and drunkenness (to which, however, our flesh inclines); through the profligate—by the inclination to depravity or loss of chastity; through thieves—by the theft of our property; he afflicts us also through those that hate and envy us, he deprives us of food, clothes, and dwellings through hard-hearted people; through all and everything earthly, by God's permission, he, as "the prince of this world,"[2] as prince of the powers of the air, as "the ruler of the darkness of this world,"[3] acts upon mankind to exasperate them and attract them to his side, making use of various seductions and oppression for this purpose. If the All-wise, All-merciful and Almighty Heavenly Father did not watch unwearyingly over us and turn to good the innumerable wiles of the tempter, if we ourselves were not watchful, the bodiless evil-doer would have long ago subdued the world to himself, and on the earth no holy seed would have remained which constitutes the substance thereof.[4]

When a man is about to pray, he must humble his proud heart, must cast away earthly vanity from it, and must bring into it living and undoubting faith.

If the carnal man is at ease and happy, the spiritual one feels oppressed; if the outward man flourishes, the inward one perishes. So opposite in us are the old, sinful, carnal man and the man renewed by Christ's grace; this is why the Apostle said, "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."[5] And we often experience this ourselves. Therefore the

[1] St. Matthew iv. 4. [2] St. John xvi. 11. [3] Ephesians vi. 12.
[4] Isaiah vi. 13. [5] 2 Corinthians iv. 16.

true Christian ought to long for outward, carnal, worldly sufferings, for they strengthen his spirit. He must not even think of murmuring. How can he murmur at that which is profitable to his immortal soul, although the means by which this is attained are very repugnant to his carnal man? Illnesses, fires, robbery, poverty, misfortunes, wars, famine, often act beneficially upon the soul.

As God is Life, and diseases and maladies are a deviation from life, therefore the touch alone of the first Source of Life cures us of them. This is why the Saviour, Who is the Life of all, cured and still cures men by His touch alone. The same may be said of the change in any contagious objects—at a single sign or single word of the Creator and Founder of everything, they become harmless (air, water, plants and animals).

Fresh temptation sometimes arises with affliction and oppression—a hardness, numbness, and insensibility of the heart to everything true, good, and holy; we feel like a stone or a block, without faith, without the capability of praying, without hope in God's mercy, without love. How sad it is to feel like a stone or a log, without faith and love, when we were created to believe, feel, hope, and love! And we must bear this patiently, and pray to God to roll away the stone of insensibility from the doors of the tomb of our heart, that He may take away from us a heart of stone and give us one of flesh. But what does this hardness or numbness in us signify? It shows the presence in our heart of the Devil, who, having forcibly taken possession of our heart through our incredulity, thrusts out from it every good thought, not allowing it to rest there, and destroys all faith and every good feeling, making the man a burden even to himself. This really does happen to men. Let them learn what it signifies.

Our various earthly service to our king and country is an image to our principal service to our King of Heaven, which must continue eternally. It is Him that we must truly serve before all, as His faithful servants through creation, redemption and His providence. Do the servants of the earthly country think of this? But we must think of it. Earthly service is a test, a preparatory service for the heavenly one: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things: I will make thee ruler over many things."[1]

Do not be unsparing judges of those who labour unto God and who fall in life into contradiction to themselves—that is,

[1] St. Matthew xxv. 21.

to their piety; they are placed in contradiction to themselves by the Devil, their wicked adversary: he catches at their heart with his teeth, forcing them to do contrary things.

Do not only do your work when you wish to, but do it especially then, when you do not wish to. Understand that this applies to every ordinary worldly matter, as likewise, and especially, to the work of the salvation of your soul—to prayer, to reading God's word and other salutary books, to attending Divine service, to doing good works, whatever they may be, to preaching God's word. Do not obey the slothful, deceitful, and most sinful flesh; it is eternally ready to rest and lead us into everlasting destruction through temporal tranquillity and enjoyment. "In the sweat of thy face," it is said, "shalt thou eat bread."[1] O miserable soul, "carefully cultivate the talent granted unto thee,"[2] sings the Church. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force,"[3] says our Lord and Saviour.

When your heart is disturbed in spirit by any passion, and you are deprived of peace, and are filled with agitation, and words of displeasure and animosity to your neighbour fall from your tongue, do not linger in this condition, so destructive to you, but immediately bend your knees and confess your sin before the Holy Ghost, saying from the depths of your heart: "I have offended Thee, Holy Ghost, by the spirit of my passion, by the spirit of evil and disobedience to Thee;" and afterwards say, from your whole heart and with the feeling of the omnipresence of the Spirit of God, the prayer to the Holy Ghost: "O Heavenly King, the Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and make Thine abode in me and cleanse me from all impurity, and save, O Blessed One, my passionate and sensual soul"—and your heart will be filled with humility, peace, and devotion. Remember, that by every sin, by every attachment to anything earthly, by every displeasure and animosity towards your neighbour, by anything carnal, you offend the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of peace and love, the Spirit Who draws us from the earthly to heavenly things, from the visible to the invisible, from the corruptible to the incorruptible, from the temporal to the eternal, from sin to holiness, from vice to virtue. O All Holy Spirit, our Ruler, our Instructor, our Comforter! keep us through Thy power. Holiness of the Father, Spirit of our Heavenly Father, implant in us, nurture in us, the Spirit of the Father, so that we may be His true children in Jesus Christ our Lord.

[1] Genesis iii. 19. [2] Condakion at Matins on Holy Tuesday.
[3] St. Matthew xi. 12.

When you are praying, watch over yourself so that not only your outward man prays, but your inward one also. Though you be sinful beyond measure, still pray. Do not heed the Devil's provocation, craftiness, and despair, but overcome and conquer his wiles. Remember the abyss of the Saviour's mercy and love to mankind. The Devil will represent the Lord's face to you as terrible and unmerciful, rejecting your prayer and repentance; but remember the Saviour's own words, full of every hope and boldness for us: "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out;"[1] and "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden"—with sins and iniquities, and the wiles and calumnies of the Devil—"and I will give you rest."[2]

Man! the Creator's omnipotence, wisdom, and mercy, which were poured out upon the visible and invisible world, are ready to be bestowed, in all their infinity, upon you also, if you endeavour to be a true child of the Heavenly Father, if you fulfil His commandments to love God and your neighbour. Give yourself up, then, untiringly, and with all your might, to good works and deeds.

Every person that does any evil, that gratifies any passion, is sufficiently punished by the evil he has committed, by the passion he serves, but chiefly by the fact that he withdraws himself from God, and God withdraws Himself from him: it would therefore be insane and most inhuman to nourish anger against such a man; it would be the same as to drown a sinking man, or to push into the fire a person who is already being devoured by the flame. To such a man, as to one in danger of perishing, we must show double love, and pray fervently to God for him; not judging him, not rejoicing at his misfortune.

Sin, instead of any arguments which it has not on its side, acts of violence, by wounding, by stinging us inwardly, by pouring into us the burning poison of sin. Blessed is he who despises all earthly things, and who is wounded by the love of God, by heavenly love. But how few such men there are amongst the fallen sons of Adam! Who is not wounded and struck by the shafts of the passions, of gain and honours? And, *vice versâ*, in whom are there the shafts of true love for God and his neighbour? The shafts of the passions and of sensual things have driven out the shafts of God's love, and do not leave room for them. For some persons these two elements are daily fighting against each other, and alternately thrust out each other, whilst in others there is not even a

[1] St. John vi. 37. [2] St. Matthew xi. 28.

struggle; the earthly shafts reign wholly in some, stifling the heavenly ones: such, for instance, is the case with those who are greedy of gain, who are sensual, greedy of honours, drunkards, deceivers, murderers, fornicators, adulterers, etc. O, when will our hearts be wholly inflamed with love for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the Life-giving God the Trinity, Who has commanded us to keep His commandments?

Why do we trouble and torment ourselves at not receiving some treasure which we had expected, or at losing it? Because that which we expected or which we have lost was the idol of our heart, because our heart has withdrawn itself from the Lord, the Source of living waters, Who Alone can fill and give peace to it. Let us cling to God with our whole heart, and no earthly loss, no non-fulfilment of the expectation of any earthly good—such as, for instance, money, marks of distinction, and others, which are outward and perishable things—will grieve us. Let us learn to live an inward life. Let us turn our thoughts to the highest blessings, to the heavenly recompense which is alone desirable, true, and makes those who obtain it truly happy.

We are generally delighted at fine, bright, warm weather, and like to talk about it; but in the heavenly abodes of the angels and saints the brightness, healthfulness, and freshness are incomparably greater. Why, then, do we not care to speak of the inmates of those dwellings, of that life, of that brightness, of that blessedness? Joyful, life-giving, and bright is the sun, but the light of God's countenance, which the angels and the souls of the righteous rejoice in, is still more joyful, life-giving, and bright. "Make us to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting. O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine heritage: govern them, and lift them up for ever."[1]

Fervent, tearful prayer not only cleanses from sins, but also cures bodily infirmities and maladies; it renews the whole of a man's being, and makes him, so to say, born again (I speak from experience). O what a priceless gift prayer is! Glory to Thee, the Only-Begotten Son of God, Who hast obtained for us through Thy mediation the endless pardon of our sins! Glory to the All-Holy Spirit, Who "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered"[2]—who gives us ardent prayer with groanings and tears, Who warms our cold souls and gives contrition and sorrow for

[1] From the Te Deum Laudamus [2] Romans viii. 26.

sins, cleansing, sanctifying, pacifying, strengthening, and renewing us! Glory to Thee, Holy Trinity, Which has no beginning, Life-giving, eternally glorified by all reasonable creatures!

It is impossible to bestow more upon you than God has bestowed upon you, for He has given you Himself, or His flesh and blood, united with His Godhead; He has made you His child,[1] when you were the child of wrath[2] and accursed; He has given you everything necessary, and outward blessings in abundance, and if He has not given you more outward blessings it is because they would have been harmful for you, for your soul and body. If, even now, you are often much harmed by these outward blessings, by attaching yourself to them, and suffer misfortunes and injuries from the passions, by falling away from the love of God and your neighbour and the aspiration for higher things and descending to the lower ones, then what would it have been if you had still more of these blessings? You would have sunk into sensuality.

Through the prayer of faith we can obtain from the All-merciful and All-bestowing God all spiritual and indispensable earthly blessings besides, if only the prayer is fervent and the desire to obtain these blessings sincere. And what prayers the Church puts into our mouths! Such, that by means of them we can easily incline the Lord to be merciful to us and to bestow upon us every good gift. The enemy, knowing God's goodness and the power of prayer, endeavours by every means to deter us from it, or during the prayer tries to distract our minds, to hinder us by various passions and attachments to earthly things, or by hurry, disturbance, etc.

When the heart is occupied with worldly things, especially superfluous ones, it forsakes the Lord—the Source of life and peace—and is therefore deprived of life and tranquillity, of light and strength; but when it repents of its care for vain things, and wholly turns from corruptible things to the incorruptible God, then the fountain of living water again begins to flow into it, and peace, tranquillity, light, strength, and boldness before God and man once more dwell within it. We must live wisely.

You do not want to pray for the man whom you hate and despise; but you must do so against your wish, and have recourse to the great Physician, because you yourself are spiritually sick of the malady of malice and pride; your enemy or the one whom you despise is also sick; pray that the meek Lord may teach you meekness and patience, that He may teach

[1] Romans viii. 16. [2] Ephesians ii. 3.

and strengthen you to love your enemies, and not only your well-wishers; that He may teach you to pray sincerely for the evilly-disposed as well as for the well-disposed.

Someone, when, during prayer, he became languid and feeble in mind and body, and longed to sleep, roused himself by the following inward question: With Whom art thou conversing, my soul? And after this, by vividly representing the Lord before him, he began to pray with great feeling and tears; his blunted attention was sharpened, his mind and heart were enlightened, and he himself wholly revived. This shows what it is to represent the Lord God vividly to ourselves, and to walk in His presence! If—he went on to say—my soul, thou darest not converse languidly and carelessly with men above thyself in station, in order not to offend them, then how darest thou converse languidly and carelessly with the Lord?

Lord, how shall I glorify Thee? How shall I praise Thee for Thy power, for the miracles of healing by means of Thy Holy Mysteries, manifested upon me and many of Thy servants, to whom I, an unworthy one, have administered these Thy holy, heavenly, life-giving Mysteries after the sacrament of penitence. They confess before me Thy power, Thy goodness, loudly proclaiming to all that Thou hast stretched out Thy wonder-working hand over them and raised them up from the bed of sickness, from their death-bed, when no one expected that they would live; and then, after the communion of Thy life-giving Body and Blood, they soon revived, were healed, and felt upon them at the very same hour and day Thy life-giving Hand. And I, Lord, the witness of Thy deeds, have not hitherto praised Thee in the hearing of all for the strengthening of the faith of Thy servants, and even do not know how and when to praise Thee, for every day I am occupied with some kind of work. Create Thyself a name, Lord, as Thou hast done; glorify Thyself, Thy name, Thy Mysteries.

Deny yourself sensual delights in the hope that, instead of them, you will obtain higher spiritual, heavenly delights. Do good to all in the hope that, in accordance with God's justice, "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again";[1] that the good you have done to your neighbour shall be sooner or later returned into your bosom, just as the evil you have done him shall sooner or later be returned into your bosom. Remember that we are one body. "We being many are one bread."[2] Remember that God is just to the highest degree, to an iota.

[1] St. Matthew vii. 2. [2] 1 Corinthians x. 17.

Where would there be opportunities for struggling for great deeds if we were not occasioned injury by our neighbours, if they did not offend us? Where would there be opportunities for patiently bearing offences, for meekness and humility? You see, then, that we must be tried by many and various evils in order to prove our virtue and be eventually crowned.

Do not be irritated either with those who sin or those who offend; do not have a passion for noticing every sin in your neighbour, and for judging him, as we are in the habit of doing. Everyone shall give an answer to God for himself. Everyone has a conscience; everyone hears God's Word, and knows God's Will either from books or from conversation with other people. Especially do not look with evil intention upon the sins of your elders, which do not regard you; "to his own master he standeth or falleth."[1] Correct your own sins, amend your own heart.

Why does the Lord allow there to be poor? For your good, so that you may be cleansed from your sins and expiate them, "for alms doth deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin";[2] so that you may win suppliants who will pray for you in the persons of those upon whom you bestow your charity, so that the Lord may be merciful to you. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."[3]

Why does the Lord allow people to be poor? For the same reason, amongst others, that He does not make you righteous all at once according to your wish. God might have made all men well off, even rich; but then a great forgetfulness of God would have arisen, and pride, envy, etc., would have increased. And you would have thought too highly of yourself had the Lord made you soon righteous. But as sin humbles you, showing you your great infirmity, impurity, and constant need of God and His grace, so likewise the poor man is humbled by poverty and his need of other people. If the poor were to be enriched, many of them would forget God and their benefactors, would ruin their souls in the luxury of this world. So destructive are riches, and so do they blind the spiritual vision! They make the heart gross and ungrateful!

Thoughts in the street, during a walk, at the sight of the rising moon. I gratify you in everything, says the Lord: I have created you after Mine own image and likeness; I have made the sun, the moon, and the stars shine for you; I have created the earth with all its fruits for you; I have

[1] Romans xiv. 4. [2] Tobit xii. 9; Sirach iii. 30. [3] St. Matthew v. 7.

diffused the air for you to breathe; I have given you fire to light and warm you, and to cook your food; I have given you various kinds of sweet food and drink; I have taught you how to make many and various tissues for your clothing, and have given you materials for this purpose; I have given you gold, silver, copper, and other metals in the bosom of the earth, for money and other objects; I have gathered you together in well-organised communities; I have given you a sovereign after Mine own heart, Mine anointed, My likeness upon earth; lastly, I have given you Mine only Begotten Son—have given Him to die for you; have given Him, by His own will, to you for food and drink. I have founded the Church upon earth under His supremacy; what have you done and what are you doing for Me? How do you recompense Me for all My goodness? By forgetting Me, by ingratitude towards Me, by denying Me, by despising My laws! "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?"[1]

Thy name, Lord, is Almighty, because Thou holdest not only heaven and earth, but also all mankind, the life of every man, the hearts of all in Thy Hand; and not only the life of every man, but also of every beast, bird, fish, insect, worm, reptile, and of every infusoria invisible to the eye. Glory to Thine infinite Omnipotence, Lord! Glory to Thine All-merciful, Most-wise, and All-powerful Providence! Lord of heaven and earth! Almighty Sovereign! Thou likewise holdest in Thy Hand all hell, with Satan and his innumerable hordes; and it is only by Thy permission, for our instruction and punishment, that Satan and his angels can lay their snares for us. As soon as we pray to Thee our Saviour, as soon as we unfeignedly repent before Thee of our sins, Thou, having taught us, sendest away our enemies from us, saying: "You have done enough evil to My servants; they belong to Me again." Thus, Lord, if Thine unceasing benefits and mercies to us do not teach us, what remains to be done? It only remains for Thee to teach us by chastisement, by bitterness, by oppression, by fire, and by our own wickedness—we sensual men, who love space, freedom, vain carnal freshness; who are slothful, negligent, and evil by nature.

The world is in a state of slumber, of sinful sleep. It sleeps. God rouses it by wars, by deadly epidemics, fires, destructive storms, earthquakes, inundations, bad harvests.

"We sing the angelic hymn to Thee, O Mighty One!

[1] St. Matthew xvii. 17.

Holy, holy, holy art Thou, O God! Through the Mother of God have mercy upon us."[1] You thus praise God together with the angels.[2] You are one assembly, one church, one family of God's with them by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore you ought also to live like the angels, in constant watchfulness over yourself and the souls of the spiritual children entrusted to your care. You must unceasingly praise and thank the Lord; you must be always striving after holiness; you must live in abstinence and fasting, in all humble-mindedness, obedience, and patience. May it be thus with you, by the Lord's grace!

What shall I bring to Thee, Lord, for all Thy mercies which Thou continually bestowest so bountifully upon me? My faith alone, for I have no works that shall justify me; I have done no good thing before Thee. But even my faith is also Thy gift. Receive Thine own of Thine own offered Thee, for everything is Thine, and we are all Thine. Thou art our most perfect Prototype. "Of Thine unspeakable glory I an image am, and though I bear offences' scars, compassionate Thy creature, Lord, and cleanse me in Thy tenderness, and the desired Fatherland give Thou to me, a citizen of Paradise me making once again."[3] Take from us carnal passions, "so that we, trampling upon all carnal lusts, may follow a spiritual manner of life, both thinking and doing always such things as shall well please Thee."[4]

Lord! as it is natural to the Prototype to attach, to assimilate to Itself Its images, to abide and to live in them, so, likewise, it ought to be natural to those who are created after Thine image to yearn with all their love, with all their ardour, after their Prototype, and to attach themselves to It. But our greedy, sensual flesh, gross and inert, withdraws us from Thee. Fasting and abstinence are necessary for us whilst we crave after sensual gratifications. Strengthen us in abstinence.

When Christ is in our heart, we are contented with everything: what has been discomfort to us becomes the greatest comfort, what was bitter to us becomes sweet, poverty becomes wealth, our hunger is satisfied, and our sorrow turns into joy! But when Christ is not in the heart, then the man is not contented with anything, he does not find happiness in

[1] From the Troparia to the Holy Trinity in the Morning Prayers.
[2] Speaking of a Priest.
[3] Troparion from the Burial Service.
[4] From the Prayer said by the Priest during the Liturgy before the Gospel.

anything: neither in health nor in comfort, nor in ranks and honours, nor in amusements, nor in rich palaces, nor in a luxuriously served table covered with all kinds of viands and drinks, nor in rich attire—in nothing. Ah! how necessary for the man is Christ, the Life-giver and Saviour of our souls! How necessary it is for Christ's sake—in order that He should dwell within us—for us to hunger and thirst, to sleep less, to dress more simply, and to bear everything with a quiet, peaceful, patient, meek spirit. The wicked fowler of our souls—the Devil, seeks at every moment to ensnare our souls; trying how he can wound us by some sin, by some passion; how he can implant some sinful habit or passion more firmly within us, so as to make the salvation of our soul as difficult as possible, so as to produce in us a coldness towards God, towards holy things, towards the Church, towards eternity, and towards mankind.

The Lord has created me, has brought me from nonentity into being, and after I had fallen, has restored me through His sufferings and death; He has cleansed me, a sinner, has made me His son by adoption; He has promised me the inheritance of eternal bliss; He has enlightened me through the light of His Gospel; He punishes and forgives me like a father; He lights me with the sun; He gives me daily food and drink; and above all He gives me His sweetest and life-giving food—His Body and Blood; He has diffused air for me to breathe, and above all He has poured upon me His Holy Spirit. He clothes me in beauteous garments; above all, He inwardly clothes me with Himself, as it is said: "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ."[1] He gives me rest in a spacious and clean dwelling, and promises me an eternal, resplendent abode in the heavens; He endows me with health: above all, He gives me spiritual health in abundance, through prayer and especially through the Holy Sacraments and other means. What shall I render to Him for all this? What can I do for Him in return? I cannot do anything, except to be faithful to Him with all my might, through fulfilling His Commandments and by offering a firm and unchanging resistance to sin and the Devil.

If it were not for Thy salvation, Lord, if it were not for Thy beneficence, we should have burned in the furnace of our own passions, Satan would have finally corrupted and tormented us, and we should not have found any comfort or joy in life. "If the Lord were not with us, we none could have withstood the enemy's attacks" "For they that overcome are thereby exalted."[2]

[1] Galatians iii. 27. [2] Antiphon of the Sixth Tone.

But now we are comforted by Thy mercy, by Thy grace, which Thou hast won for us by Thy sufferings, by Thy Blood, by Thy death for us. Glory to Thee for this, Lover of men! But how will it be with those Christians who do not wish to know Thee, Thy Commandments, Thy teaching? Woe unto them!

What would it be, my Lord and God, Jesus Christ, if the light of Thy Godhead were to shine forth from Thy most pure Mysteries, when they rest upon the Holy Altar, or on the holy disk during the Liturgy, or in the tabernacle, or in the pyx, when the priest carries them upon his breast going to or coming from a sick person? Before such a light, all those who saw it would prostrate themselves to earth in fear, for even the angels cover their faces from fear of Thine inaccessible glory! But meanwhile, how indifferently some people behave towards these most heavenly Mysteries! How carelessly some persons celebrate the terrible service of the Holy Mysteries!

I must always remember my relation to God, on one side, as that of a creature to the Creator, as that of a work of art to the Artist, of a potter's vessel to the Potter; on the other side, as that of an image to its Prototype, that of a child to its Father, of one saved to the Saviour, of one loaded with benefits to the Benefactor, of one who is under the law to the Law-Giver, of one who has entered into the Testament to the Giver of the Testament, of one who is betrothed to the Bridegroom, or of a bride to the Bridegroom, of a member, of a citizen of the great city to its Chief, of one looking for the ages to come to the Father of those ages, of an accused to the Judge.

In everything and at every time strive to please God and think of the salvation of your soul from sin and from the Devil, and of its adoption by God. On rising from your bed, make the sign of the Cross and say: "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost," and also: "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin and teach me to do Thy Will."[1] While washing, either at home or at the baths, say: "Purge me with hyssop, Lord, and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."[2] When putting on your linen, think of the cleanliness of the heart, and ask the Lord for a clean heart: "Create in me a clean heart, O God!"[3] If you have made new clothes and are putting them on, think of the renewal of the spirit and say: "Renew a right spirit within me";[4] laying aside old clothes,

[1] From the Great Doxology at Matins.
[2] Psalm li. 7.
[3] Psalm li. 10.
[4] *Ibid.*

and disdaining them, think with still greater disdain of laying aside the old man, the sinful, passionate, carnal man; tasting the sweetness of bread, think of the true Bread, which gives eternal life to the soul—the Body and Blood of Christ—and hunger after this bread—that is long to communicate of it oftener; drinking water, tea, sweet-tasted mead or any other drink, think of the true drink that quenches the thirst of the soul inflamed by passions—of the most-pure and life-giving Blood of the Saviour; resting during the day, think of the eternal rest, prepared for those who wrestle and struggle against sin, against the subcelestial spirits of evil, against human injustice or rudeness and ignorance; lying down to sleep at night, think of the sleep of death, which sooner or later will unfailingly come to all of us, of that dark, eternal, terrible night, into which all impenitent sinners will be cast; meeting the day, think of the nightless day, eternal, most bright—brighter than the sunniest earthly day—the day of the kingdom of Heaven, at which all those will rejoice who have striven to please God, or who have repented before God from their whole life during this temporary life; when you are going anywhere, think of the righteousness of spiritually walking before God and say: "Order my steps in Thy word and let not any iniquity have dominion over me;"[1] when doing anything, strive to do it with the thought of God, the Creator, who has made everything by His infinite wisdom, grace, and omnipotence, and has created you after His image and likeness; when you receive or have any money or treasure, think, that our inexhaustible Treasury, from which we derive all the treasures of our soul and body, the ever-flowing Source of every blessing is—God, thank Him with all your soul and do not shut up your treasures within yourself, lest you shut the entrance of your heart to the priceless and living treasure—God, but distribute part of your property amongst those who are in want to the needy, to your poor brethren, who are left in this life so that you may prove upon them your love, your gratitude to God and be rewarded for this by God in eternity; when you see the white glitter of silver, do not be allured by it, but think that your soul should be white and should shine with Christ's virtues; when you see the glitter of gold, do not be allured by it, but remember that your soul ought to be purified as gold is, by fire, and that the Lord desires to make you yourself shine like the sun, in the eternal, bright kingdom of His Father, that you will see the Sun of Righteousnes—God, the Trinity, the Most-Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, and all the heavenly powers and Saints, filled with ineffable light and shining with the light poured upon them.

[1] Psalm cxix. 133.

Lord! what shall I bring Thee? How shall I thank Thee for Thy continual great mercies to me and the rest of Thy people? For I am at every moment vivified by Thy Holy Spirit. Each moment I breathe the air Thou hast diffused—the soft, pleasant, healthful, strengthening air—I am lighted by Thy life-giving and joyful light, both spiritual and material; I am nourished and my thirst is quenched by the sweetest life-giving spiritual food and drink, by the Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood, and with the sweetness of material food and drink besides. Thou clothest me with the brightest, most splendid royal garment—with Thyself—according to the Scripture—"As many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ"[1]—and with earthly garments also. Thou cleansest me from my transgressions, healing and cleansing me also from my evil, sinful passions. Thou takest away my spiritual corruption, through the power of Thy immeasurable holiness, wisdom, and might. Thou fillest me with Thy Holy Spirit, the Spirit of holiness and grace. Thou givest righteousness, peace and joy, expansion, power, boldness, courage, and strength to my soul. Thou bestowest precious health upon my body. Thou teachest "my hands to war and my fingers to fight"[2] against the invisible enemies of my salvation and blessedness; against the enemies of holiness and of the power of Thy glory; against the subcelestial spirits of evil. Thou crownest me with success in my works accomplished in Thy name. For all this I thank, glorify, and bless Thy most gracious, fatherly, almighty power, God, our Saviour, our Benefactor. May the rest of Thy people know Thee as Thou hast revealed Thyself unto me, Lover of men. May they know Thee, Thy grace, Thy providence, Thy wisdom and power, and glorify Thee, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen.

"The unspeakable bliss of them that behold the infinite goodness of Thy countenance."[3] Earthly bliss all passes away by itself, and also through vicissitudes of human life; whilst joys of heavenly bliss will never end—will be infinite. Is it not worth while, therefore, to despise all the enjoyments of this transitory world, and of this still more fleeting life, in order to strive with the whole heart after spiritual and unchangeable joys.

It is madness for a Christian to be envious. In Christ we have all received infinitely great blessings; are all made godly; are all made inheritors of the unspeakable and eternal blessings of the kingdom of heaven. And we are also promised a

[1] Galatians iii. 27. [2] Psalm cxliv. 1.
[3] From the Russian Orthodox Church Morning Prayer: Prayer of St. Basil the Great

sufficiency of earthly blessings, upon the condition of seeking the righteousness of God and the Kingdom of God. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."[1] We are commended to be contented with what we have, and not to be covetous. "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have." And it is added, "For He" (the Lord) "hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'"[2] Is it not, therefore, madness, after this, to envy your neighbour anything—for instance, his honours, his wealth, his luxurious table, beautiful clothing, his fine house, etc.? Is not all this mere dross in comparison to that which has been given us in the image and likeness of God, according to which we were created, in our redemption by the Son of God from our sins, from the curse and from death, in the bestowal upon us again of the blessing of our Heavenly Father, and in the eternal heavenly joys united with it? Therefore let us strive to acquire mutual love, goodwill, and contentedness with what we have; friendship, hospitality, love for the poor, for the stranger, "and to attain to the summit of virtues," humility, meekness, gentleness, and holiness. Let us respect the image of God in each other, the members of Christ, our God, His Body, God's sons by adoption, the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, the dwellers with, and companions of, the angels in praising God. "That they may be one,"[3] as our God, worshipped in the Holy Trinity, is Himself one, and has created our hearts "as one" for unity—that is, simple, single.

All present things are but a shadow of the future. The present light is a shadow of the future ineffable light. Earthly bliss is a faint shadow of future unspeakable, eternal bliss; fire a faint shadow of the fire of Gehenna, which will burn sinners unto ages of ages; pure earthly joy a shadow of unspeakable future joys; the magnificent royal palaces a faint shadow of the resplendent mansions of Paradise prepared for those who love God and fulfil His commandments. The glorious attire of the sons and daughters of men cannot be compared with that glorious garment with which the elect shall be clothed, for they will put on Christ. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of the Father,"[4] according to the Saviour's sure promise.

As a child is indifferent to whatever clothes are put on it, so also the Christian, an infant in Christ, should be indifferent to the variety, richness, and beauty of his earthly garments,

[1] St. Matthew vi. 33.
[2] Hebrews xiii. 5.
[3] St. John xvii. 22.
[4] St. Matthew xiii. 43.

considering Christ, our God, his best and incorruptible garment; for an attachment to expensive, fine clothes is peculiar to the children of this world and to the heathen, as the Lord says, "For after all these things"—that is, food and fine raiment—"do the Gentiles seek";[1] for dress is the idol of the children of this world. O, how vain and frivolous are we, we who are called to communion with God, to whom is promised the inheritance of incorruptible and eternal blessings! How obscure is our understanding of corruptible and incorruptible blessings! How unwise we are in valuing worthless things and not prizing incorruptible blessings: our immortal soul, peace, joy, boldness before God, holiness, obedience, patience in general—all the qualities of a true Christian. "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ."[2] Therefore we must value spiritual blessings and valour, and despise material things as corruptible and worthless.

The sin of inattention is one to which we are, in a great degree subjected; we must not disregard it, but must repent of it; we give ourselves up to inattention, not only at home, but also in church. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."[3] The causes of inattention are—the Devil, and our manifold attachment to worldly, earthly things; its reason is—want of faith; the means to overcome it—fervent prayer.

There is no happiness for me on earth save the Lord Jesus Christ, with His Father and the Holy Ghost. He is my sole blessedness upon earth. After God, there is nothing on earth dearer to me (as it should be, than the human soul—it is dearer than anything else. Man is a precious being. God Himself came down from heaven upon earth for his salvation. To man He gives for food and drink His most pure Body and Blood (all Himself), only that he may become blessed, that he may not be lost. All the fruits of the earth, the treasures of all the three kingdoms of the earth, He has given into the dominion for the use and pleasure of man. By all these immeasurable bounties the Lord has shown, and still shows, that He infinitely loves mankind, and every man separately. Let us, too, imitate God's love and bountifulness; let us be, as far as possible, merciful and bountiful, as our Heavenly Father is merciful.[4]

Wherever I look with my spiritual vision, whether within me or upon me, or outside of me—everywhere, I see powerful

[1] St. Matthew vi. 32.
[2] Galatians iii. 27.
[3] St. Luke xxii. 31.
[4] St. Luke vi. 36.

reasons for thanking and praising the Lord. Especially when I look only within myself: then I see the strongest reason for doing so. The whole strength of my heart, all my spiritual light, comes from God; all my bodily strength, everything that serves to maintain my bodily life, comes from God. Everywhere I see the glory the sole glory, of my God, and see nothing in myself of which I could boast as of my own. Glory to Him Who gives me strength! Glory to Him Who works through me, and within me. As I have nothing of my own, and have everything from God, down to the smallest good inclination of my heart, down to every holy and bright thought, whilst without God I am nothing—worse than this, I am all evil; therefore I have the strongest reasons to have recourse to God in prayer for everything. I have especially powerful reasons to thank God for His most pure and life-giving Sacrament—His Body and Blood; it is everything to me. I fervently praise the Lord Jesus Christ, our God, for His unspeakable love to us mortals, revealed in the Holy Sacrament.

What an immeasurably great honour it is to mankind that they can open their lips before God; that they can converse with Him, and are able to make request to Him of their needs; to thank Him for His benefits, to praise His unspeakable magnificence, and to be assured that this sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise is agreeable to God; that our highest spiritual requests to Him relating to the salvation of our souls are always fulfilled! How immeasurably high is man exalted in this respect above all other sentient and animate creatures! No other creature has received such honour from God, though they, too, have tongues, expressing the needs of their nature; for it is said that young ravens call upon Him.[1] Let us, therefore, make use of this great honour, in order to be worthy of a still higher honour from the Lord—of the heavenly calling. There, in heaven, shall be our full glory; whilst here its beginning only is revealed to true Christians.

On account of our corporeity and spirituality, the Lord unites His grace, even Himself, to everything visible and material, and works through everything: thus He transforms bread and wine into His own Body and Blood, or into His visible tabernacle. He changes the temple into His own house; upon the altar in the temple He invisibly sits, enthroned as a king; upon the cross He manifests Himself, as though in the same body in which He was crucified, and works miracles by means of the cross, showing His life-giving power through it. He is everywhere throughout the universe, as in a temple, and, at the same time

[1] Psalm cxlvii. 9.

being wholly everywhere, is not limited by any space, being always above every space and time. You marvel that He can unite His own self, or His power and His saving grace, to matter. Marvel, first of all, how He has united in man His Godly image with matter, with earth and dust; how this dust can think, speak, and diffuse around itself the fragrance of goodness, righteousness, truth, and love, and can accomplish in the common life so many wonderful, truly wonderful, deeds. Marvel also at how many various kinds of speechless souls are enclosed in the dust, gifted with some kind of sense, with a thirst after life and joy, with a feeling of self-protection, a capacity for finding themselves food, for constructing what is necessary for their safety, and for bringing their children into the world, and understanding how to defend themselves cleverly. Marvel how nearly all inanimate bodies are united with invisible, intangible powers, which sometimes move their enormous masses (as with the heavenly bodies), sometimes turn them into beautiful, and always identical, unchangeable forms (as in plants). Marvel that so many different powers are created by God; for all powers are derived from the one Single Power, and the Almighty Himself works through every power. Truly, everything appertaining to God the Creator, as to the God of wonders, is wonderful; likewise in faith—everything is wonderful, though invisible, but true and real! "The pure in heart shall see God."[1] God is an all-seeing Eye, a spiritual Sun, standing above the world, penetrating with His spiritual eyes into the thoughts and hearts of men, enlightening every creature. Our soul is an eye from the Eye, sight from the Sight, light from the Light. But now, since our fall into sin, our eye, our soul, is diseased through sins. Take the cataract off your eye, and you will see the spiritual Sun, the everlasting Eye, ten thousand times brighter than the material sun.

How often it happens in life that a man has one thing in his heart and another upon his lips, and wears two faces at one and the same time! It is thus also during prayer, before God Himself, Who knows the secrets of the heart; a man also frequently wears two faces, saying one thing and having another in his heart and thoughts. If, which happens still oftener, when saying a prayer, although he understands it and thinks about it, he does not sympathise in his heart with that which he is saying—being dead, and thus throwing the words to the air—then he deceives himself if he believes that he can please God by such a prayer. This is strange, sinful duplicity! It is a bitter fruit and evidence of our fall into sin. It seems habitual to our heart to lie in prayer

[1] St. Matthew v. 8.

and in our intercourse with other men. The heart is a pillar of falsehood. "All men are liars."[1] The Christian must make use of every means in order to eradicate every falsehood from his heart, and to implant pure truth within it. We must begin with prayer, as with a matter in which truth is indispensable before everything, in accordance with the Lord's own words: "Worship Him in spirit and in truth."[2] Speak the truth from your heart.[3] When we have learnt to speak the truth from our heart during prayer, we shall not allow ourselves to lie in our everyday life: sincere, true prayer, having cleansed our heart from falsehood, will protect it against falsehood in our relations with other men in worldly matters. How can we teach ourselves to speak the truth from our heart during prayer? We must bring every word of the prayer down to our heart, lay it to heart, feel its truth in our heart, be convinced of all our need of that for which we ask God in prayer, or of the need of hearty gratitude for His great and innumerable benefits to us, and of most heartfelt praise for His great, most wise works in His creation.

Everything that constitutes me man (the soul), lives solely by God, and only in union with Him, whilst when the soul separates itself from God, then it experiences extreme distress. But the life of my soul consists in the peace of my spiritual powers, and this peace proceeds exclusively from God. There is, it is true, carnal peace also, but it is a delusive one—the forerunner of spiritual storm—of which the Lord says: "When they shall say (to men), Peace and safety, then suddenly destruction cometh upon them";[4] but spiritual peace, which proceeds from the Spirit of God differs, as heaven from earth, from such carnal peace. It is heavenly blissgiving. "Peace I give you," often said the Lord to His disciples, giving them His peace, and the Apostles also gave "peace to believers," and wished them God's peace as the highest blessing, because God's peace constitutes the life of our soul, and witnesses to the union of our soul with God. The absence of peace in the soul—disturbance, by which all the passionate conditions of our soul are distinguished—is spiritual death and the sign of the action of the enemy of our salvation in our hearts.

Faith is the key of God's treasury. She dwells in simple, kind, loving hearts. "All things are possible to him that believeth."[5] Faith is a spiritual mouth, the more freely it

[1] Psalm cxvi. 10. [2] St. John iv. 24. [3] Psalm xv. 2.
[4] 1 Thessalonians v. 3. [5] St. Mark ix. 23.

opens the greater the stream by which the Divine springs enter into it; let this mouth freely open, as your bodily one does; do not let your lips be compressed by doubt and unbelief: if you compress them by doubt and unbelief, the treasury of God's blessings will be closed to you. The more openly, the more heartily you believe in God's omnipotence, the more bountifully will God's heart be opened to you. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them."[1]

All men are the breath and the creation of the One God—from God they have come forth, and to God, as to their origin, they will return: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."[2] "That by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."[3] As the breath of the One God, and as having proceeded from one man, men ought, naturally, to live in mutual love, mutually caring for one another, and ought not to be divided from each other by selfishness, pride, malice, envy, avarice, or unsociability of character, "that they may be one."[4] Look at the ants, how friendly they are; look at the bees, how friendly they are; look at the flights of pigeons, daws, rooks, crows, geese, ducks, swans, sparrows, how friendly they all are; look at a flock of sheep, and in general at any horned cattle, how friendly they all are. Think of the innumerable shoals of some sorts of fishes in the seas and rivers, which always like to move in shoals, how friendly they are. Think also how zealously they all take care of each other, help each other, love each other—and be shamed by the dumb creatures, you who do not live in love with others and flee from the obligation of bearing one another's burdens.[5]

God is long-suffering and merciful to you: this you experience many times every day. Be long-suffering and merciful to your brethren, also fulfilling the words of the Apostle, who thus speaks of charity before everything: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind."[6] You desire that the Lord should rejoice you by His love, rejoice on your part the hearts of others by your tender love and kindness.

God is love, a most-gracious, all-wise and omnipotent Being. Therefore, those who pray must believe that the Lord will give all things needful, bountifully, as He is loving, and bountiful

[1] St. Mark xi. 24. [2] Ecclesiastes xii. 7. [3] 2 Peter i. 4.
[4] St. John xvii. 22. [5] Galatians vi. 2. [6] 1 Corinthians xiii. 4.

wisely, as He is All-wise; and as He is omnipotent, there and then, when we do not expect.

During Divine service, during the celebration of all the sacraments and prayers, be trustful, as a child in relation to his parents. Remember what great Fathers of the Church, what inspired luminaries, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, are guiding you! Be simple, trustful, undoubting as a child in godly matters. Cast all your care upon the Lord, and be entirely free from sorrow. "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you."[1] The Lord has long ago freed us from this care, this sorrow, having taught our God-fearing Fathers by His Spirit, what to say and how to pray to the Lord at Divine service, at the celebration of the sacraments and upon various other occasions and circumstances of human life, requiring prayer to bring down a blessing from above. It ought to be easy for us to pray. Only the enemy troubles us. But what matters his troubling if our heart is firmly established in the Lord! It is only a misfortune if we do not rest in God; if there is no firm faith in us, if we have bound ourselves by worldly attachments, if our intellect is proud and presumptuous, then, even in the most holy, most pure matter of service, at the celebration and communion of the Holy Mysteries, the enemy will greatly hinder us.

Be as kind, meek, humble, and simple as possible in your intercourse with all, considering yourself not hypocritically inferior to all in respect to your spiritual condition; that is, more sinful and weaker than all. Say to yourself, "Of all sinners I am the first." From pride proceeds self-sufficiency, coldness, and insincerity in our behaviour to our inferiors, or to those from whom we do not expect to obtain any advantage.

How quick we are to evil and how slow to good! Now I desire to do good to my enemy, and to really show him kindness, but before I succeed in becoming kind in my heart, I am already evil, a fiery arrow of evil already inwardly burns one; I wish to be patient, but before I have strengthened my heart in patience, I become irritable, impatient; I wish to be humble, but Satan's pride has already found ample room in my heart; I wish to be gracious, meanwhile, when it is necessary to show graciousness, I show myself rough; I wish to be unmercenary and generous, but cupidity and avarice, upon the least occasion, like hungry and roaring lions, require to be fed; I wish to be

[1] St. Matthew x. 19, 20.

simple, trustful, but cunning and doubt already gnaw at my heart; I wish to be grave, concentrated, and reverent in my service to the Almighty, but light-mindedness and inattention of the heart prevent my becoming so; I wish to detach myself from earthly things, to be abstinent in food and drink, but when I see pleasant food and drink and sit down to table, I, like a slave, am taken a willing captive by my belly, I easily allow myself to eat and drink more than my nature requires, greediness and intemperance again prevent and get the better of my desire to be indifferent to food and drink, thus I am like that impotent man who lay for thirty-eight years upon his bed, and came many times to the pool of Bethesda, which made whole whosoever first stepped in after the troubling of the water by an Angel, "but always another stepped down before him."[1] And when I, having become impotent through my sins, make an effort and come to myself, with the intention of immersing myself in God and of changing for the better, another steppeth into my heart before me, sin and the Devil forestal me in my own house, in my own pool of Bethesda, and do not allow me to reach the Source of living waters, the Lord—do not allow me to immerse myself in the cleansing pool of faith, humility, heart-felt contrition and tears. Who will heal me then? Jesus Christ alone. When He sees my sincere and firm desire to be healed of my spiritual infirmity, when He hears my fervent prayer, then He will say to me: "Take up thy bed and walk,"[2] and I shall rise from the bed of spiritual infirmity and walk; that is, by His grace I shall easily vanquish all my passions and fulfil every virtue.

During prayer, intentional, deliberate, extreme humility is indispensable. We must remember, who speaks and what he says, this is especially necessary during the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father . . ." Humility destroys all the snares of the enemy. Ah! how much secret pride there is in us. This, we say, I know; this I do not need; this is not for me; this is superfluous; in that I am not a sinner. How much sophistry of our own!

When you pray, say in your heart, against the various thoughts and provocations that come from the enemy: "The Lord is everything to me." Likewise, during all your life, when passions attack you, and during every oppression of the enemy, and during sickness, afflictions, misfortunes, and disasters, say: "The Lord is everything to me; I myself can do nothing —cannot bear anything, cannot surmount, conquer anything— He is my strength."

[1] St. John v. 7. [2] St. John v. 8.

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed."[1] O contemptible shame! O devilish shame! O stink of Satan's ascending from the well of the abyss! How many are diseased with it? How many do not recognise its enticement and become enslaved by it, to the ruin of their souls? Look at worldly writers, journalists —writers of *feuilletons*. They write, write, write. . . . of what will they not write during their literary career? But of God, of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, of the Church, of Divine service, of the Christian festivals, of the resurrection of our body, of the judgment, of the life beyond the grave—they do not even make mention. They say it is not their province, not their business. We are of the world, we speak of worldly matters, and therefore the world listens to us; but if we were to speak of God, perhaps nobody would read what we write. Thus worldly literature is completely foreign to the spirit of Christianity, it even seems to be ashamed of the spirit of Christ.

The Devil cunningly induces us—instead of irritating us against himself—to notice our neighbours' sins, to make us spiteful and angry with others, and to awaken our contempt towards them, thus keeping us in enmity with our neighbours, and with the Lord God Himself. Therefore, we must despise the sins, the faults themselves, and not our brother who commits them at the Devil's instigation, through infirmity and habit; we must pity him, and gently and lovingly instruct him, as one who forgets himself, or who is sick, as a prisoner and the slave of his sin. But our animosity, our anger towards the sinner only increases his sickness, oblivion, and spiritual bondage, instead of lessening them; besides this, it makes us ourselves like madmen, or sick men, the prisoners of our own passions, and of the Devil, who is the author of them.

Every sin proceeds from the spirit of evil; he who sins is the slave of sin, is tortured by sin; therefore, do not be too severe, but be gentle with him who sins, knowing our common infirmity. Pity the sinner, as one who is sick, or who has lost his way, and is walking in darkness, or as one who is bound with iron fetters, as one whose mind is deranged; for all these qualities may be attributed to a sinner, or to one who is under the dominion of some passion. It is necessary to watch over such a man in every way, so that the fire of sin should not burn him, should not darken him, should not bind him, should not plunge him into sickness, should not destroy him.

[1] St. Mark viii. 38.

We are accustomed to the works of God, and therefore value them but little; we do not, for instance, value even man as we ought to—that greatest work and miracle of God's omnipotence and grace. Look upon every man, whether he is one of your household, or a stranger to you, as upon something perpetually new in God's world, as upon the greatest miracle of God's omnipotence and grace, and do not let the fact of your being accustomed to him serve as a reason for you to neglect him. Esteem and love him, as your own self, constantly, and unchangeably.

Sometimes in nature a warm, healthful wind blows, pleasantly and lightly, permeating and coming in contact with the body, and the sky is serene; whilst at other times a cold wind blows, one feels, somehow, distressed and feverish, the wind pierces to the very bones and affects the body unpleasantly, the earth and sky are darkened; or else sometimes the state of the atmosphere is warm and warmth-giving, and at other times cold, benumbing. It is likewise in the spiritual life: sometimes our soul is surrounded and penetrated by a light, pleasant, warmth-giving, vivifying breath, we feel ourselves happy and tranquil; whilst at others our heart is touched by a heavy, deathly breath, accompanied by complete spiritual darkness. The first state proceeds from the Spirit of God, the second from the Devil. It is necessary to accustom ourselves to everything: as in the first case, not to grow self-conceited, so in the last, not to fall into despondency, into despair, but to fervently have recourse to God.

If men had not been created according to the image of God, the Lord would not have been incarnate of the most holy Virgin. O how our nature is raised, both in its creation and in its redemption! Through the incarnation of the Son of God from the most holy Virgin Mary, God has most truly united Himself with men. "O Thou, by Thy glorious birth-giving hast united God-the-Word with men, and linked our apostate nature with heavenly things."[1] Glory to Thee, Who art meetly praised by every reasonable creature, for Thou hast obtained from God such grace and purity that Thou wert able, through favour of God the Father, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, to give flesh to the Son of God! Make us also worthy, O Lord, to attain purity of spirit and body through the communion of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Thy Son.

Through His incarnation the Lord has entered into the closest relation with man. It is marvellous! God Himself is

[1] Prayer to the Most Holy Mother of God at Vespers.

united in one person with man. God became flesh—"the Word was made flesh."[1] God Himself partook of our carnal food and drink, was laid in a manger, lived in a house. He Who cannot be contained by the heavens walked upon the earth, upon the waters, upon the air. "He went up," it is said, "toward heaven."[2] He was nailed to the tree, "He Who hangeth the earth upon nothing by His command."[3] The whole earth, the waters, and the air—all are sanctified by the incarnate Son of God; therefore the earth is dear to Him—this temporary abode of men, this inn of the human race, this place of His habitation amongst men. But especially dear to Him are men themselves, whose souls and bodies He has received into unity with His own Person, and especially with true Christians. He is in them, and they in Him.

What is above all desirable for man? The avoidance of sin, the remission and forgiveness of sins and the attainment of holiness. Wherefore? Because sins, such as, for instance, pride, evil behaviour towards our neighbours, wicked suspiciousness, covetousness, avarice, envy, etc., separate us from God, the Source of life, withdraw us from fellowship with other men, and plunge us into spiritual death; whilst gentle, humble, and kind behaviour to all, even to our enemies, simplicity, disinterestedness, contentedness with little and with the indispensable, generosity to everyone, goodwill and all other virtuous qualities, unite us to God, the Source of life, and to other men by endearing us to them. Grant then, Lord, that we may entirely flee from sin; that we may accustom ourselves to every virtue, through Thy grace. Yea, Master, Lord, without Thee we, "being evil,"[4] can do no good thing.

We must not be exasperated, angry, and proud, as is habitual to our corrupt nature, against those who are angry, envious, or proud towards us, but we must pity them as overcome by the flames of hell, and by spiritual death; we must pray to God for them from the depths of our hearts, that the Lord may take away the darkness from their souls and enlighten their hearts by the light of His grace. We are darkened by our own passions, and do not see the foolishness, the monstrousness of them, and of our conduct; but when the Lord enlightens us by the light of His grace, then we, awaking as from a sleep, clearly perceive the monstrousness, the foolishness of our thoughts, feelings, words, and actions; our heart, which was hardened until then, softens; the evil passes away and is replaced by mercy, kindness, and indulgence. Therefore, in accordance with our

[1] St. John i. 14.
[2] Acts i. 10.
[3] Canon of the Fifth Tone.
[4] St. Matthew xii. 34.

Saviour's words, we must also love our enemies: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you,"[1] for they, our brethren are also blind, have also gone astray.

This present life is a life of exile: "The Lord God," it is said, "sent him forth from the garden of Eden;"[2] and we, all of us, must earnestly strive to regain our country through repentance and works meet for repentance. Lord, "the desired fatherland give Thou to me, a citizen of Paradise me making once again."[3] The present life is the narrow way, the way of afflictions, privations, and maladies. The narrower the way, the more convincing, the surer it is, that we are going the right, true way; the wider, the more certain it is that we are nigh to destruction. The present life is a daily, cruel, most bitter struggle against the enemies of our salvation, especially against the invisible, sub-celestial spirits of evil, who do not leave us in peace for a single day, but constantly make use of their craft and subtility against us, kindling various passions within us, and wounding us in the most acute manner by their shafts. Remember, therefore, that an incessant war is waged against us; that there is not time to rest, to enjoy, and amuse ourselves in this life, which is given us for our preparation for the future one; neither when we are tried by misfortunes; nor even then, when it seems to us we are perfectly easy and happy, as, for instance, when we give ourselves to pleasure at theatres or soirées, when we display ourselves in festive attire and ornaments, when we give ourselves up to the pleasures of the table, when we turn round in the gay dance, drive in fine equipages, etc. Amidst all your worldly pleasures, man, the greatest misfortune hangs over you. You are a sinner; you are God's enemy; you are in great danger of losing eternal life, especially if you live negligently, if you do not do works meet for repentance. The wrath of God hangs over you, especially if you do not appease the God Whom you have offended by your prayers, penitence, and amendment. Thus, this is no time for you for pleasures, but rather for tears; your pleasures should be rare, and principally such as are afforded you by faith—in spiritual festivals.

God is an almighty power over all material worlds. More than that, He is a most wonderful, most merciful, and most just power over the spiritual world—that is, the world of angels and men. In His hands are all spirits, their peace and blessedness, as well as the anguish and torments of evil spirits and evil men.

[1] St. Matthew v. 44. [2] Genesis iii. 23. [3] Troparion for the Burial Service.

As we sometimes blaspheme the Divinity by the impure, dark, and evil state of our soul—blaspheme the Father, the Word, and the Most Holy Ghost, the Comforter—so, on the contrary, some men, through the benign disposition of their souls, are capable of comforting all by their words, thus glorifying the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost the Comforter, "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."[1]

The Almighty Lord. His omnipotence embraces all creatures, the highest and the lowest, intellectual and sentient, angels and men, heaven and all that is therein, the earth and everything upon it, the sea and everything within it. His omnipotence absolutely embraces everything in general and every part of creation. Thus it embraces the heart of man and his thoughts; therefore it is said, "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord."[2] This is also why the Apostle says, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God."[3] If God's grace leaves my heart and my mind I become as the dust carried away by the wind, without any moral stability, with an inclination to every possible evil; both my mind and my heart become empty, trivial, dark, and powerless.

The Virgin Mary is the most merciful sovereign of all the sons and daughters of men, as the Daughter of God the Father, Who is love; the Mother of God the Word, of our love; the chosen bride of the Holy Ghost, Who is love consubstantial with the Father and the Word. How can we do otherwise than have recourse to such a sovereign and expect to receive all spiritual blessings from Her?

Firmly purpose in your soul to hate every sin of thought, word, and deed, and when you are tempted to sin resist it valiantly and with a feeling of hatred for it; only beware lest your hatred should turn against the person of your brother who gave occasion for the sin. Hate the sin with all your heart, but pity your brother; instruct him, and pray for him to the Almighty, Who sees all of us and tries our hearts and innermost parts. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."[4] It is impossible not to often fall into sin unless you have a hatred of it implanted in your heart. Self-love must be eradicated. Every sin comes from the love of self. Sin always appears, or feigns to be, to wish us well, promising us plenteous-

[1] 2 Corinthians i. 4.
[2] Proverbs xxi. 1.
[3] Corinthians iii. 5.
[4] Hebrews xii. 4.

ness and ease. "The tree was good for food, and it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise."[1] This is how sin always appears to us.

If guardian angels did not preserve us from the snares of evil demons, O how often we should have fallen from one sin into another; how devils would have tormented us—they who delight in tormenting men—which indeed happens when the Lord allows the guardian angels to withdraw themselves from us for a time, and devils lay snares for us. Yes, the angels of peace, our true guides, the guardians of our souls and bodies, are ever with us if we do not voluntarily drive them away from us by the abomination of sensuality, pride, doubt, and unbelief. We somehow feel that they cover us with the wings of their immaterial glory, only we do not see them. Our good thoughts, inclinations, words, and deeds, all proceed from them.

The enemy often wounds our souls by his malice and burns us. This wound spreads like a gangrene in the heart if we do not stop it in time by the sincere prayer of faith. And God wounds our souls by His love, but this wound is light, sweet, not burning, but warming and vivifying.

Concerning penitence. Penitence should be sincere, perfectly free, and not in any way forced by any particular time and habit, or by the person before whom the sinner confesses. Otherwise it would not be true penitence. It is said: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[2] Is at hand—that is, it has come by itself. It is not necessary to seek for it long—it seeks us, our free inclination; that is, you yourself must repent with heartfelt contrition. "They were baptized of him" (is said of those baptized of John) "confessing their sins"[3]; that is, they themselves acknowledged their sins. And as our prayer consists principally of penitence and asking forgiveness of our sins, it must absolutely be always sincere and perfectly free, not against our will, not forced out of us by habit and custom. Such also should be our prayer when it is one of thanksgiving and praise. Gratitude supposes the soul of the man benefited to be full of free, lively feeling flowing freely from the mouth, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."[4] Praise, too, supposes an ecstasy of wonder in the man who contemplates the infinite goodness, wisdom, and omnipotence of God in the moral and material world, and therefore it ought also to be a perfectly free and intelligent action. In general, prayer should be a free and perfectly

[1] Genesis iii. 6.
[2] St. Matthew iv. 7.
[3] St. Matthew iii. 6.
[4] St. Matthew xii. 34.

conscious outpouring of the man's heart before God, "I have poured out my soul before the Lord."[1]

In order to purify and stimulate our prayer, the Lord allows the Devil to painfully inflame our inward parts, so that we, feeling a strange fire within us, and suffering from it, may endeavour to bring into our heart by means of humble prayer the fire of God, the fire of the Holy Ghost giving life to our hearts.

The Lord allows the enemy to tempt us in order to prove us, in order to strengthen our spiritual powers in our struggle against the enemy, and so that we ourselves may see more clearly towards what our heart inclines, whether it inclines to patience, hope, and love and in general to virtue, or to irritability, incredulity, murmuring, blasphemy, malice, and despair. Therefore we must not be despondent, but must good-humouredly and patiently bear spiritual darkness that descends upon our soul, the fire that weakens and inclines us to impatience and malice, the affliction and oppression, knowing that all these are indispensable in the order of our spiritual life, that by these the Lord is proving us. Do not let us blaspheme against the true way—the way of holy faith and virtue, and do not let us prefer the evil way. We are free, and must strengthen ourselves by every means and with all our power in faith and virtue, unto the laying down of our life[2] for the way of truth; and how can this be if we have no temptations?

The Devil strikes the hearts of priests with slothfulness, dryness, and barrenness, in order that they should not preach the truths of the Gospel to God's people, should not tell them the entire Will of God. During prayer he also works upon the heart, and strikes it with insensibility, so that the prayer should not be sincere, but only said out of habit; he does not let the heart contemplate during prayer the greatness of all God's perfections, the greatness of the Mother of God, that of the Angels, and of God's Saints. The Devil is like a wicked, sharp-pointed needle, which, at every time and everywhere, gets into the eyes of your heart, dimming and eclipsing them; he is the poisonous dust which always flies about our spiritual atmosphere and settles corrosively upon our hearts, eating them up and piercing them. He acts in the same manner upon some teachers of religion, striking their hearts with dryness and oppression, in order that they may not teach God's truths sympathetically to the young branches of Christ's vine, nor water them with the life-giving streams of the Gospel.

[1] Prayer of Hannah, the mother of Samuel (1 Samuel i. 15).
[2] St. John xv. 13.

Here is a society of men of the world: they go on talking and talking, for the greater part amusing themselves with trifles, and there is no mention of God—the common Father of all—of His love for us, of the future life, of recompense; why is it so? Because they are ashamed to speak of God. But what is still more surprising is that even persons deeming themselves pious, themselves luminaries, seldom speak of God, of Christ the Saviour, of the preciousness of time, of abstinence, of the resurrection from the dead, of judgment, of future bliss and everlasting torments, either in their family circle or amongst men of the world, but often spend their time in futile conversations, games, and occupations! This is, again, because they are ashamed to converse upon such subjects, being afraid to weary others, or fearing that they themselves may not be able to converse heartily upon spiritual subjects. O, adulterous and sinful world! Woe unto thee at the day of judgment by the universal and impartial Judge. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."[1] Yes, the Lord and Creator of all is not received by us! He is not received into our houses, nor into our conversations; or, else, when a man reads a religious book or prayers aloud, why does he sometimes do so as if against his will, reluctantly, his tongue hesitating? His mouth speaketh not out of the abundance of the heart, but out of straitness and emptiness it can scarcely speak at all. Why is this so? It proceeds from the neglect of reading books and of prayer, and from false shame sown in the heart by the Devil. What miserable creatures we men are! We are ashamed of that which ought to be regarded as the highest honour. O, ungrateful and evil-natured creatures! What torments do we not deserve for such conduct.

When the enemy does not succeed in hindering the Christian upon the path of salvation by means of afflictions, oppression, poverty and various other privations, maladies, misfortunes, then he rushes to the other extreme: he fights against him by his own health, tranquillity, softness, the weakness of his heart, the insensibility of his soul to spiritual blessings, or by the opulence of his outer life. O, how dangerous is this last condition! It is more dangerous than the first state—the state of affliction, oppression, of sickness, etc. In such a state we easily forget God; we cease to feel His mercies; we slumber and spiritually sleep. "While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made: Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him."[2] But in affliction we involuntarily turn to God to be saved; we constantly feel that God is the God of our salvation—"the God

[1] St. John i. 11. [2] St. Matthew xxv. 5, 6.

Who saves"—that He is our life, our breath, our light, our strength. Thus, it is better for the Christian to live in some or other kind of affliction.

Prayer is—spiritual breathing; when we pray we breathe in the Holy Ghost; "praying in the Holy Ghost."[1] Thus, all church prayers are—the breathing of the Holy Ghost; as it were spiritual air and also light, spiritual fire, spiritual food and spiritual raiment.

Holy Ghost, all we Christians are—Thy breath, Thy birth after baptism; by Thy first creative breathing into the person of the first man, we, all races of the earth, are—Thy breath, Thy birth! Have mercy upon us, raise us up, Holy Ghost! Drive away from us by Thy breathing the stench of our sins and passions, and uproot all our sinful inclinations!

During prayer always firmly believe and remember that every thought and word of yours may, undoubtedly, become deeds. "For with God nothing shall be impossible."[2] "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."[3] This signifies that even your words shall not be without power. "All things are possible to him that believeth."[4] Take heed of your words; the word is precious. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."[5]

The Word is the expression of the truth; the truth itself, being and deed. The Word precedes every being, every thing, as the cause of their being—past, present, or future. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, Which is, and Which was, and Which is to come, the Almighty."[6] Thus speaks the creative Word of the Father. In Him—in the Word—is the cause of all creatures—present, past, and future.

Why do we honour the cross with such reverence that we make mention of its power in our prayers after asking for the intercession of the Mother of God and the heavenly Powers, before asking for that of the Saints, and sometimes even before asking for that of the heavenly Powers? Because, after the Saviour's sufferings, the cross became the sign of the Son of man, that is, the cross signifies the Lord Himself, incarnate and suffering for our salvation. On the cross Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice to God the Father for our sins on the cross, and by it, He has saved us from the works of the enemy; and this is why we honour it with such great reverence. And therefore it will

[1] Jude i. 20. [2] St. Luke i. 37. [3] 1 Corinthians vi. 17.
[4] St. Mark ix. 23. [5] St. Matthew xii. 36. [6] Revelation i. 8.

always be a great power for believers, delivering them from every evil, and especially from the evil action of invisible enemies.

As light, air, and water are found together and mutually penetrate each other and, at the same time, do not intermingle, each of them remaining what it was before ; the light—remaining light, the air—air, and the water—water, each entirely preserving its own particular properties, but the substance forming one matter, so also, in a somewhat similar manner, the Persons of the Most Divine Trinity are always found together, and are not separated from each other. The Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, whilst the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and resteth in the Son. But at the same time each Person has Its own particular properties : God the Father is not begotten, not created, does not proceed ; the Son is begotten ; the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, whilst the substance of the three Persons is one, a Divine, incomplex substance. This similarity is based upon the words of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who calls Himself the Light of the world, and thus speaks of the Holy Ghost, comparing It in Its actions to the element water : "He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive."[1] He also compared the Holy Ghost to the air or wind : "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit."[2] The Holy Church sings of the Holy Ghost : "To the Holy Ghost belongs every all-saving cause : on whomsoever He, through worthiness doth breathe, He quickly taketh him from earthly things."[3]

It is the same to the Lord to give flesh to any creature He likes, either to an animal or a plant, as it would be to me to make a garment or clothing and put it on myself : "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews."[4] And what an infinite multitude and variety of material the Lord has, out of which He, the Creator, creates various clothing, of various shapes for His creatures (animals, birds, fishes, reptiles, insects)! And us He will eventually clothe with light, like unto of the sun in his kingdom! "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in a vesture of gold."[5] "Then shall the righteous shine forth, as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."[6] And now we are clothed with the earth, water, air, warmth—such is our present clothing. And how

[1] St. John vii. 38, 39. [2] St. John iii. 8.
[3] From the Burial Service of a Priest.
[4] Job x. 11. [5] Psalm xlv. 10. [6] St. Matthew xiii. 43.

wisely and conveniently all these elements are made and brought into union in our being! It is not heavy, and it is comely. O, Most-wise and Almighty Artist! Life-giving Artist! How beautiful, suitable, and animate is everything that Thou hast created! At Thy Will even the dust is animate, the dust moves!

The chief thing in prayer for which we must care above all is—lively, clear-sighted faith in the Lord: represent Him vividly before yourself and within you—then ask of Jesus Christ in the Holy Ghost whatever you desire and you will obtain it. Ask simply, without the slightest doubt—then your God will be everything to you, accomplishing in an instant great and wonderful acts, as the sign of cross, accomplishes great wonders. Ask for both spiritual and material blessings not only for yourself, but for all believers, for the whole body of the Church, not separating yourself from other believers, but in spiritual union with them, as a member of the one great body of the Church of Christ, and loving all, as your brethren or children in Christ, as the case may be. The heavenly Father will fill you with the great peace and boldness.

When praying, pay steadfast attention to the words of the prayer, feeling them in your heart. Do not withdraw your mind from them to any other thoughts. When praying during Divine service, during the celebration of the Sacraments and the singing of the prayers and hymns upon various occasions, lay surely to your heart the words themselves of the church prayers, believing, that not a single word is placed there in vain, that every one of them has its power, that in each word dwells the Holy Trinity the Lord Himself, "Who is everywhere present and fills all things": think thus:—I myself am nothing, the Lord does everything. Also think: when I speak—God the Word, speaks in me. I need be careful for nothing. "Casting all your care," it is said, "upon Him, for He careth for you."[1]

When you read a worldly magazine or newspaper, it is light and agreeable reading, you easily believe in everything in it. But if you take up a religious publication or book to read, especially one relating to church matters, or sometimes when you begin reading prayers—you feel a weight upon your heart, you are tormented by doubt and unbelief, and experience a sort of darkness and aversion. Many acknowledge this. From what does it proceed? Of course, not from the nature of the books themselves, but from the nature of the readers, from the nature of their hearts, and—chiefly—from the Devil, the enemy of mankind, the enemy of everything

[1] 1 Peter v. 7.

holy: "he taketh away the word out of their hearts."[1] When we read worldly books, we do not touch him, and he does not touch us. But as soon as we take up religious books, as soon as we begin to think of our amendment and salvation, then we go against him, we irritate and torment him, and therefore he attacks us and torments us on his side. What can we do? We must not throw aside the good work, the reading or prayers that are profitable to our souls, but we must patiently endure, and in patience save our souls. "In your patience possess ye your souls,"[2] says the Lord. The same applies to theatres and churches, to the stage and Divine service. Many people find it pleasant to go to the theatre, and oppressive and dull to go to church. Wherefore? Because in the theatre everything is well suited to please the sensual man, and when we are there we do not provoke the Devil, but please him, and he, on his side, affords us pleasure, and does not touch us. Make merry, my friends, thinks he—laugh, only do not remember God. Whilst in the church everything is adapted to arouse faith and the fear of God, pious feelings, the feeling of our sinfulness and corruption; and the Devil sows in our hearts doubt, weariness, despondency, evil, impure and blasphemous thoughts—so that the man is not glad in himself, and cannot stand for even an hour, and he gets away as quickly as possible. The theatre and the church—are opposite contrasts. The one is the temple of the world, and the other the temple of God; the one is the temple of the Devil, and the other—the temple of the Lord.

When you are asked to pray that someone may be saved from bodily death, for instance, from drowning, from death through any sickness, from fire, or from any other disaster, commend the faith of those who ask you to do so, and say in yourself: Blessed be your faith, according to your faith may the Lord fulfil my unworthy, feeble prayer, and may He increase my faith.

You easily forgive yourself, if you have sinned against God, or against men; accordingly easily forgive other people too. Love your neighbour as yourself, forgive him much. "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven,"[3] said the Lord. By this love is known. Even this is little for love to do: love loves its enemies, does good to them which hate it, blesses them that curse it, and prays for them which despitefully use it.[4]

[1] St. Luke viii. 12.
[2] St. Luke xxi. 19.
[3] St. Matthew xviii. 21, 22.
[4] St. Luke vi. 27, 28.

The Lord, unto Whom all hearts are open, knowing our avarice and trivial, covetous calculation in those cases, when we have to show hospitality and kindness to people, from whom we do not expect to receive the equivalent,—has promised to remunerate us in the day of judgment, not only for having given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, for having visited the sick and those in prison, but He has promised a reward even for a cup of cold water, given to a Christian or to an unbeliever in His name. "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, ... verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."[1] O, the loving-kindness, and mercy of Christ! Who, after this, will not be ashamed of the hardness of his heart, and his shameful avarice!

The Devil, as a spirit, as an incomplex being, can hinder and wound the soul by a single instantaneous movement of the thought of wickedness, of doubt, blasphemy, impatience, irritation, malice, by an instantaneous movement of any attachment of the heart to anything earthly, by a movement of intuitive sight, adultery and other passions—he can fan the spark of sin, with the cunning and malice peculiar to him, into a flame, raging with infernal strength within the man. We must stand fast and strengthen ourselves by every means in God's truth, rejecting the lies, illusions, and malice of the Devil, at their very beginning. In such cases, the man should be all watchfulness, all eyes, hard as adamant, invincible in every part, firm and invulnerable. O, Glory, glory to Thy victory, Lord! Thus may I conquer, by the power of Thy might, the invisible and visible enemies, all the days of my life, until my last breath. Amen. O, simplicity of faith, do not leave me.

Do not have any partiality, not only either for food and drink, for dress, for a spacious and richly decorated dwelling, for the luxurious furniture of your house, but not even for your health, do not even have the least partiality for your life, give up all your life to the Will of the Lord, saying: "for, to me to live—is Christ and to die—is gain."[2] "He that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal."[3] Attachment to the temporary life, to one's own health, leads to many deviations from God's Commandments, to the indulgence of the flesh, to breaking the fasts, to evading the conscientious fulfilment of the duties connected with our service, to despondency, impatience, irritability. Never sleep before saying evening-prayers, lest your heart should become

[1] St. Matthew x. 42. [2] Philippians i. 21. [3] St. John xii. 25.

gross from ill-timed sleep, and lest the enemy should hinder it by a stony insensibility during prayer. "Be sober, be vigilant."[1] "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."[2] "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."[3] "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."[4]

Pray, my brethren, to the Mother of God when the storm of enmity and malice bursts forth in your house. She, Who is all-merciful and all-powerful, can easily pacify the hearts of men. Peace and love proceed from the one God, as from their Source, and Our Lady—in God, as the Mother of Christ the Peace, is zealous, and prays for the peace of the whole world, and above all—of all Christians. She has the all-merciful power of driving away from us at Her sign the sub-celestial spirits of evil—those ever-vigilant and ardent sowers of enmity and malice amongst men, whilst to all who have recourse with faith and love to Her powerful protection, She soon speedily gives both peace and love. Be zealous yourselves also in preserving faith and love in your hearts; for if you do not care for this, then you will be unworthy of the intercession for you—of the Mother of God; be also most fervent and most reverent worshippers of the Mother of the Almighty Lord; for it is truly meet to bless Her—the ever-blessed; the entirely spotless Mother of our God, the highest of all creatures, the Mediatrix for the whole race of mankind. Strive to train yourself in the spirit of humility, for She Herself was more humble than any mortal, and only looks lovingly upon the humble. "He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden" (said She to Elisabeth), of "God, Her Saviour."[5]

Do not let the Devil sow enmity and malice in your heart against your neighbour; do not let these feelings nestle in any way in your heart; otherwise your malice, even if not expressed in words, but shown only in your glance, may infect through sight the soul of your brother also (for nothing is so infectious as malice, it easily infects especially those, who have in their hearts an abundance of unslumbering malice), and fans the spark of evil in them into a whole flame. Be watchful: "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."[6] "For, nothing is secret, that shall not be

[1] 1 Peter v. 8. [2] St. Matthew xxvi. 41. [3] St. Matthew xxv. 13.
[4] St. Mark xiii. 35, 37. [5] St. Luke i. 47, 48. [6] St. Matthew vii. 2.

made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad."[1]

Cultivate the Christian art of doing good, of heartily blessing those who curse you, by which you will please your Lord Christ, Who said: "Bless them that curse you. Love your enemies" sincerely, not regarding their enmity—but respecting in them the image of God, according to which they are created, and seeing in them your own self. "Do good to them which hate you," as the Son of the heavenly Father, Who is kind even "unto the unthankful and to the evil," believing that you will overcome evil with good, because good is always more powerful than evil. "Pray for them which despitefully use you," so that through your prayer you may save them also, by God's grace, from the evil malice and the snares of the Devil, and save yourself too from misfortune. "Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again,"[2] for everything comes from God, and, should the Lord will, He can take everything away from you. Remember, that you yourself have come naked out of your mother's womb, and naked shall you return thither,[3] and shall not take anything away with you. If you will thus live, you will gain for yourself the priceless treasure of peace and love, and shall live long on the earth: for "the meek-spirited," it is said, "shall possess the earth: and shall be refreshed in the multitude of peace."[4]

I look to Thee alone, Lord, with my spiritual vision. I believe in Thee undoubtingly. Thou Thyself knowest how and what to give me. Thou art—the treasury of every blessing, Thou art—mercy, wisdom, and omnipotence abundantly flowing upon all creatures. Thus I also look to Thee, O Holy Virgin. "Intercede for and have mercy upon me Thyself!"

Do not grow despondent and enfeebled in spirit, seeing the constant struggle within you of evil against good, but like a good and valiant soldier of Jesus Christ, our great Founder, struggle courageously against evil, looking at the crown, prepared by the Lord for all who conquer evil in this world and in their flesh. "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne."[5]

In order not to remember the malice of your neighbour against you, but to pardon him with all your soul, remember,

[1] St. Luke viii. 17.
[2] St. Luke vi. 27, 35, 28, 30.
[3] Job i. 21.
[4] Psalm xxxvii. 11; St. Matthew v. 5.
[5] Revelation iii. 21.

that you, yourself, are not free from malice, as well as from all other passions. Recognise your neighbour's infirmities and passions as your own: "forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."[1] O, how sinful I am, how loathsome I am by my sins in the eyes of God, of men, and even in mine own! Who can be more loathsome to me than myself? Truly nobody; in comparison to me all are righteous. I must be unmercifully angry with myself, and must consider it a special happiness to forgive my neighbour's trespasses and offences against me, an unworthy one, so that the long-suffering, bountiful, and merciful Lord may forgive me even some of my trespasses. I must remember, that it is only by this that I can become deserving of the Lord's mercy to me, otherwise I ought long to have ceased to live.

O, how full of misery, of difficulties, and how grievous is this earthly life! From morning till night, daily, we must carry on a grievous warfare against the carnal passions, fighting against our soul, against "principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places,"[2] whose craft and subtilty are immeasurably evil, infernally artful, indefatigable! O, Sweetest Saviour, Thou Who calleth unto Thyself all those who labour and are heavy-laden—to give them rest! Thou seest: our heart and bosom are wasted from this daily struggle and affliction, we are unnerved, weakened, we walk like shadows. Our evil enemies continually vex our souls, and endeavour by every means to draw us into the abyss of despair. Stretch forth, Master, Thy mighty right hand, and deliver us from the snares of the dragon of olden time, the murderer of men. "If any man will come after Me, said the Lord, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."[3] But who is the daily cause of our cross, our afflictions and distresses? The old carnal man, and the Devil with his continual snares.

To look unto the Lord during the struggle against any passion, or after having committed any sin and repented of it, gives peace to our doubting hearts, and a wonderful brightness to our countenance. "Thou hast put gladness in my heart; Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us."[4] O, how bright does our countenance become when we look upon the God of our hearts by the exertion of our faith, with our spiritual vision! Truly, then the Lord Himself is with us, as He said: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee."[5] "I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him

[1] Ephesians iv. 32. [2] Ephesians vi. 12. [3] St. Luke ix. 22.
[4] Psalm iv. 6, 7. [5] Psalm l. 15.

and honour him."[1] O, Thou most-bountiful and long-suffering God, Thou Who art ready to pardon unto seventy times seven the sins and transgressions of all those who heartily repent and ask Thy forgiveness—have mercy upon us, who every hour offend many times against Thee. Amen.

What infinite nothingness our food and drink represent on the one side, and what infinite grandeur the man himself who is fed by them represents on the other side! Is it not the greatest insanity for man, for his image of God, for this partaker of the divine nature, for whom God may be all—"God may be all in all"[2]—to grudge food, drink, clothing, dwelling, and anything else earthly! Let the dust be dust—but let the immortal image of the immortal God be always exalted and preferred before everything earthly, corruptible and transitory! Therefore, do not let us be sparing of anything for our neighbour! O, what a great honour it is—to feed, to clothe, to give rest to the image of God! Most-gracious and Most-bountiful God! fill our hearts with mercy and bountifulness!

God's saints had "the eyes of their understanding enlightened,"[3] and with these eyes they clearly saw the wants of our sin-corrupted nature; clearly saw for what we should pray, for what we should ask, for what we should give thanks, how we should praise the Lord, and they left us the most perfect ensamples of prayers of various kinds. O, how beautiful these prayers are! Sometimes we do not feel and do not know their value, whilst we well know the value of food and drink, of fashionable attire, of well-furnished rooms, of theatres, of music, of worldly literature, especially of novels, that fluent, empty mass of words—and, alas! we trample under feet the precious pearls of prayer; and whilst everything worldly finds a welcome, wide shelter in the hearts of most people, prayer—alas!—does not find even a narrow corner in them, cannot get into them. And when it begs us to let it in, it is thrust out like a mendicant, like the man who had not a wedding garment.

Rejoice at every opportunity of showing kindness to your neighbour as a true Christian who strives to store up as many good works as possible, especially the treasures of love. Do not rejoice when others show you kindness and love—consider yourself unworthy of it; but rejoice when an occasion presents itself for you to show love. Show love simply, without any deviation into cunning thoughts, without any trivial, worldly, covetous calculations, remembering that love is God Himself. Remember that He sees all your ways, sees all the thoughts and movements of your heart.

[1] Psalm xci. 15. [2] 1 Corinthians xv. 28. [3] Ephesians i. 18.

Do not let pass any opportunity for praying for any man, either at his request or at the request of his relatives, friends, of those who esteem him, or of his acquaintances. The Lord looks favourably upon the prayer of our love, and upon our boldness before him. Besides this, prayer for others is very beneficial to the man himself who prays for others; it purifies the heart, strengthens faith and hope in God, and enkindles our love for God and our neighbour. When praying, say thus: "Lord, it is possible for Thee to do this or that to this servant of Thine; do this for him, for Thy name is the Merciful Lover of Men and the Almighty." "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts [not only] unto your children [but also to strangers], how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give all possible good things to them that ask Him!"[1]

Glory to Thee, Lord, our Father, most wise prover of my love for Thee and my neighbour! Do not leave me without the temptations which are necessary and beneficial in accordance with Thy wisdom and truth, not for a single day of my life. May they confirm, strengthen, and increase my love for Thee and my neighbour, and may I not appear poor and empty before Thy face at the day of Thy judgment!

If I, a weak man, when I wish to do anything within the limits of my capability am able to do it (for instance, if I wish to write a book, I write it; if I wish to cure an illness, I cure it; if I wish to make anything, I make it—for instance, if I want to build a house or a church, I build such a house or church; or if I say to another man, "Come," and he comes; "Go," and he goes; "Do this," and he does it) then cannot God, the Almighty, do everything that He may desire? "As for our God, He is in heaven; He hath done whatsoever pleased Him."[2] If sometimes a man only says two words, that something shall be, and it really comes to pass—though, perhaps, not at once, but after a certain time—then will not everything be done at once that is commanded by the word of the Creator? Will not everything that He desires be done at once at a single word from Him? "For He spake the word, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created."[3] We are not creators of men, yet they do so much at our word; we are not creators of things, yet, in accordance with our wishes and acts, they take thousands of shapes and serve for our innumerable requirements and pleasures. We do not create matter, but we create both great and small objects from matter. Cannot,

[1] St. Matthew vii. 11. [2] Psalm cxv. 3. [3] Psalm cxlviii. 5.

therefore, the Creator, Who is everywhere present, and fills all things, at Whose word all things came from non-existence into being, by Whose thought, by Whose will, and by Whose word all the infinite varieties of things were created and exist, create anything He desires? If a human physician can sometimes bring back to life a half-dead person by means of the knowledge of his profession, and skilful, well-directed action upon the cause of the illness, cannot, therefore, the Creator of physicians and of the science of healing cure, at His single wish and word, every illness? Cannot the Creator even raise the dead at His single word? Let us render glory to Him, we of little faith, and let us say to Him from our hearts: "All things are possible unto Thee, Lord, and nothing is impossible to Thee. Amen."

O Thou Almighty Sovereign, to Whose single sign all things, the whole visible and invisible world, are obedient, grant that I may unceasingly glorify Thee by the simplicity of my faith in Thine infinite power. Give me the faith that will not be ashamed, firm hope, and unfeigned love for Thee and my neighbour.

"He [God] is before all things, and by Him all things consist."[1] A great, immeasurable meaning is contained in these words. They explain the name of "I Am that I Am," by which name the Lord named Himself to Moses. For "I Am" signifies Him Who exists before all things, and by Whom all things exist. These words show the infinite omnipotence and grace and the immeasurable wisdom of the Lord our God. "Great is our Lord, and great is His power, and His wisdom is infinite."[2]

If, being in an assemblage of men, you call a person known to you, and he comes to you; if you ask one or many men subservient to you to do anything for you within the limit of his or their capability, and they fulfil your request, satisfying it according to your desire, and even beyond your desire, then be assured that, likewise, in God's Church, in that great house of God divided into two halves—the heavenly and the earthly—any of the members of the Church in Heaven whom you call upon will come to your spiritual help conformably to his grace and the abundance of his love. Ask him to do anything for you that you please, especially anything relating to the Kingdom and righteousness of God, and he will do it through his close association with God, the Source of grace and power. God's saints also hear you—as, for instance, the whole congregation

[1] Colossians i. 17. [2] Psalm cxlvii. 5.

hears you when you pray or speak the Word—for they are in the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit is everywhere present, and fills all things.

Our self-love and pride manifest themselves especially in impatience and irritability when some of us cannot bear the slightest unpleasantness intentionally, or even unintentionally, caused us by others; or obstacles lawfully or unlawfully, intentionally or unintentionally, opposed to us by men, or caused by the objects surrounding us. Our self-love and pride would like everything to be as we wish, that we should be surrounded by every honour and comfort of this temporal life; would like all men, and even—how far is pride carried!—all nature itself, to speedily and silently obey a sign from us; whilst, alas! we ourselves are very slow to faith and to every good work—slow to please the one Master of all. Christian! you must absolutely be humble, meek, and long-suffering, remembering that you are clay, dust, nothingness; that you are impure; that everything good that you have is from God; that your life, your breath and everything you possess are God's gifts; that for your sins of disobedience and intemperance you ought now to redeem your future blessedness in Paradise by the long-suffering which is indispensable in this world of imperfections and innumerable transgressions of the fallen men living together with us, and forming the numerous members of the one sin-sullied human race. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."[1] He who is impatient and irritable does not know himself and the human race, and is unworthy of the name of Christian. In saying this, I pronounce judgment against myself, for I am the first of those who are afflicted with impatience and irritability.

Our life is children's play, only not innocent, but sinful, because, with a strong mind, and with the knowledge of the purpose of our life, we neglect this purpose and occupy ourselves with frivolous, purposeless matters. And thus our life is childish, unpardonable play. We amuse ourselves with food and drink, gratifying ourselves by them, instead of only using them for the necessary nourishment of our body and the support of our bodily life. We amuse ourselves with dress, instead of only decently covering our body and protecting it from the injurious action of the elements. We amuse ourselves with silver and gold, admiring them in treasuries, or using them for objects of luxury and pleasure, instead of using them only for our real needs, and sharing our superfluity with those in want. We amuse ourselves with our houses and the variety

[1] Galatians vi. 2.

of furniture in them, decorating them richly and exquisitely, instead of merely having a secure and decent roof to protect us from the injurious action of the elements, and things necessary and suitable for domestic use. We amuse ourselves with our mental gifts, with our intellect, imagination, using them only to serve sin and the vanity of this world—that is, only to serve earthly and corruptible things—instead of using them before all and above all to serve God, to learn to know Him, the all-wise Creator of every creature, for prayer, supplication, petitions, thanksgiving and praise to Him, and to show mutual love and respect, and only partly to serve this world, which will some day entirely pass away. We amuse ourselves with our knowledge of worldly vanity, and to acquire this knowledge we waste most precious time, which was given to us for our preparation for eternity. We frequently amuse ourselves with our affairs and business, with our duties, fulfilling them heedlessly, carelessly, and wrongfully, and using them for our own covetous, earthly purposes. We amuse ourselves with beautiful human faces, or the fair, weaker sex, and often use them for the sport of our passions. We amuse ourselves with time, which ought to be wisely utilised for redeeming eternity, and not for games and various pleasures. Finally, we amuse ourselves with our own selves, making idols out of ourselves, before which we bow down, and before which we expect others to bow down. Who can sufficiently describe and deplore our accursedness, our great, enormous vanity, the great misery into which we voluntarily throw ourselves? What answer shall we give to our immortal King, Christ our God, Who shall come again in the glory of His Father to judge both the quick and the dead, to declare the secret thoughts of all hearts, and receive from us our answer for every word and deed. O, woe, woe, woe to us who bear the name of Christ, but have none of the spirit of Christ in us; who bear the name of Christ, but do not follow the teaching of the Gospel! Woe to us who "neglect so great salvation"![1] Woe to us who love the present fleeting, deceptive life, and neglect the inheritance of the life that follows after the death of our corruptible body beyond this carnal veil!

One of the infirmities of the human spirit is its slowness to faith and its slothfulness in acquiring a knowledge of the truth, especially of the truths of faith and piety. What do youths, and even grown-up and elder people, study most inertly and slothfully? The truths of faith and piety. This is proved by innumerable experiences.

[1] Hebrews ii. 3.

In order that men should esteem and love each other, should not be proud, should not be arrogant to each other, the most wise Lord has given to different men different natural and beneficial advantages, so that they may have need of each other. In this manner each one of us must involuntarily acknowledge this or that infirmity and humble himself before God and men.

Lord, Thou Thyself hast said by Thy most pure lips: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."[1] I long to be perfect. Be Thou therefore every perfection for me, for Thou hast also said: "For without Me ye can do nothing."[2]

All prayers assume the great poverty and misery of our fallen nature; they also assume that the Lord is the ever flowing source of every perfection, every blessing; that He is our inexhaustible treasury. Truly, we must have poverty of spirit during prayer and at all times. "Blessed are the poor in spirit."[3]

Consider how great is man: "God dwelleth in him, and he in God;"[4] so that in a pious Christian it is as though not a man but Christ Himself lives. "Nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;"[5] because the whole soul becomes Christ's, as iron in a furnace itself becomes fiery like a burning coal: it is all fire, all light, all warmth.

Preserve a meek and peaceable disposition towards your brother, even when he cunningly or artfully, or somehow unintentionally deprives you of all you possess. Show then that you love God's image in him more than anything earthly and perishable, that your "charity never faileth."[6] "Of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again."[7] "And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also."[8] Do not let the enemy shame you for laying your hopes upon such earthly dust as money and food, more than upon God, but shame him himself by your firm trust in God and in His Holy Word. For "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."[9] Mark; "by every word." For every word of the Lord Creator can support your life, just as every word can create and transform thousands of creatures. "For He spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast."[10] Thus at His word He brought

[1] St. Matthew v. 48.
[2] St. John xv. 5.
[3] St. Matthew v. 3.
[4] 1 John iv. 15.
[5] Galatians ii. 20.
[6] Corinthians xiii. 8.
[7] St. Luke vi. 30.
[8] St. Matthew v. 40.
[9] St. Matthew iv. 4.
[10] Psalm xxxii. 9.

from non-existence into being the myriads of the immortal heavenly hosts, and having sanctified them by the Holy Ghost, strengthens and supports them in their being. Do not foolishly lower the dignity of your immortal spirit by vainly trusting in earthly dust. Say, "My trust is in God," or "The Father is my trust, the Son is my refuge, the Holy Ghost is my protection. O, Holy Trinity, glory to Thee!"[1] And yet how many of us become irritated and lose their temper when they are deprived, not of their last coin, but only of some small part of by no means their last property! How much agitation, anger, bile, bitter reproaches, murmuring, sometimes even curses! Righteous God! can this dross called money, or this food and drink produce such storms in our Christian souls, in us who know the words of our sweetest Saviour? "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Behold the birds of the air, they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."[2] Or: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."[3] My God! to what have we come? In what are we better than heathens in our mode of life? Where is our faith, our trust in God, our love for our neighbour? O, pride of Satan! O, what shame is ours! Heavenly Father! Thou who knowest what things we have need of, and givest them to us before we ask Thee,[4] have mercy upon us unfaithful, ungrateful, and evil-natured ones. Lord, we hear Thy merciful words: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;"[5] but being daily tempted by earthly blessings, we do not heed them, and transgress Thy will.

Do not fear bodily privations, but fear spiritual privations. Do not fear, do not be faint-hearted, do not be irritated when you are deprived of money, food, drink, enjoyments, clothes, dwelling, even of your body itself; but fear when the enemy deprives your soul of faith, of trust, and love for God and your neighbour; when he sows hatred, enmity, attachment to earthly things, pride, and other sins in your heart. "Fear not them [men] which will kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul."[6]

"But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end,"[7] is said of the unchangeableness of God. O, if you, men, were always the same—to-day, to-morrow, the day after to-morrow

[1] Prayer of St. Johannices, from the Evening Prayers of the Russian Church.
[2] St. Matthew vi. 25, 26, 33.
[3] St. Luke xii. 15.
[4] St. Matthew vi. 8.
[5] Hebrews xiii. 5.
[6] St. Matthew x. 28.
[7] Psalm cii. 27.

and so on—and if you did not change in a thousand ways like a kaleidoscope! O, if you too were always equally peaceful, kind, simple, amiable, patient, industrious, benevolent, and generous! But you can be such if by hearty faith and love you unite yourself to the Unchangeable. "For I am the Lord, I change not."[1] "I preserve My servants from falling into evil, for I am the source of mercy, benefiting those who serve Me worthily."[2]

Peace is the integrity and health of the soul; to lose peace is to lose spiritual health.

Reverence with all the powers of your soul all the sacraments, and say to yourself in respect to every sacrament before the celebration or the communion of it: "This is God's mystery. I myself am only the unworthy witness or partaker of it." Otherwise, our proud intellect even wishes to search out God's mystery, and, if unable to penetrate it, rejects it as not coming under the small measure of our intellect.

If a single word of an earthly king causes great deeds to come to pass in his kingdom—he speaks and the work begins and is accomplished—then will not the word of the Lord of all material and spiritual, visible and invisible creatures, accomplish everything He desires? Shall He speak and it not be created? Shall he speak and it not be done? O, Almighty Power, able to accomplish everything in one single moment, do not leave us on account of our sins, and above all on account of our incredulity and despair, to be tormented by our own infirmities, lest we be destroyed like earthen vessels. Grant that we may believe with all our hearts in Thine Almighty Power; that we may not doubt in the fulfilment of our every right request.

All visible nature, all its parts, great and small, down to the very smallest, at every instant remind us that everything has proceeded from the Lord, and exists and moves by Him —that everything is or comes into being through Him, and at each moment obeys Him.

O, how low has our nature fallen through our passion for eating! O, thrice accursed Satan, who has precipitated us, and still precipitates us, through food, into thousands of evils! O, food and drink, that so powerfully tempt us! How long shall we be allured by you and place our life in you? When shall we engrave deeply upon our hearts the Saviour's words:

[1] Malachi iii. 6. [2] Canon of the Archangel.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,"[1] and bring these words into our life and actions? How long will our greediness, self-indulgence, surfeiting, and drunkenness continue? How long will our abominable avarice and love of money continue? How long will our pride, animosity and malice against our neighbour, through money, dress, houses, food, and drink last? Thousands of Satan's deceits, by means of food, dress, and money, disclose themselves to our spiritual vision, and yet we still continue to be allured by his enticements as though by something real, useful to us, whilst in fact we are caring for neither more nor less than destructive illusions, and for that which is most pernicious both spiritually and bodily to our own selves. Do not believe, brethren, in the enemy's enticements, not for one single moment, when the matter concerns food and drink, however plausible they may apparently be. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."[2] "I spake not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which is hypocrisy,"[3] in matters of faith and piety. Pay the utmost attention to faith and piety. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you."[4] Give away even the last that you have, if there is need of it, remembering the words of the Saviour: "If any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also"[5]—that is, give away the last that you have.

"After their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."[6] Is not this what men of the world, and even many of the clergy are now doing? Do they not choose for themselves teachers that flatter their hearing? They do not learn of the one Teacher—Christ, from His Gospel and His Church; but they learn of worldly journalists, novelists, poets, actors, and exclaim: "Ah, how interesting all this is!—how instructive it all is!" and say, if not in words, then by their deeds: "We have no need of either the Gospel or the Church, with its services, its sacraments, and preaching of God's Word. We have such good, such most moral teachers." Lord Jesus! To what have we come! They have cast Thy words behind them.[7]

Do not be despondent and do not fall into despair when you feel within your soul the deadly breath and ferment of malice and evil, impatience and blasphemy, or any weakness from

[1] St. Matthew iv. 4. [2] St. Matthew vi. 33.
[3] St. Matthew xvi. 11; St. Luke xii. 1. [4] St. John vi. 27.
St. Matthew v. 40. [6] 2 Timothy iv. 3. [7] Psalms l. 17.

impure thoughts; but fight against them unremittingly and endure valiantly, calling with all your heart upon the Lord Jesus —the Conqueror of hell. Humble yourself deeply, deeply, acknowledging yourself from the depths of your soul as the first of sinners, unworthy of human fellowship, and the Lord, seeing your humility and your struggle, will help you. Call also to your help the speedy Mediatrix, the Most Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, saying: "Heal, most pure Lady, the many painful wounds of my soul, and strike the enemies constantly fighting against me."[1]

If you truly call God your Father, then trust in Him as in the one Father, most merciful, Almighty, most wise, unchangeable in His love and in His perfections. Trust in Him in respect to the blessings of this temporal life, but especially in respect to granting you future blessings in Christ Jesus. Engrave deeply on your heart the words: "God is my Father. Our Father, which art in heaven." But as through the love of the heavenly Father for you, you yourself have become the child of God, as having come forth from Him, as possessing reason and free will, you ought, on your part, to use all your efforts to attain the blessed and eternal heavenly inheritance; you ought to know and always remember that you are a fallen being. And as you fell possessing reason and freedom—fell by your own will—then by that same reason, which is enlightened by the light of the word of God and the divine light of the Holy Ghost, by that same free will, strengthened by the grace of the Holy Ghost in Christ Jesus, rise up from your fall and go forward without stopping towards the heavenly, endless life, despising all earthly things as perishable and quickly passing away, and especially not attaching yourself to silver and gold, to food and drink, through which such a depth of evil has fallen upon all the human race.

Thank our most speedy Mediatrix, our Lady, the Mother of our Lord, the most pure, most good Virgin Mary, for saving us through our fervent prayers from the harassments and oppression of the Devil. Look up to Her, with the eyes of your heart, in the Holy Ghost, who is everywhere present, fills everything, and who is incomplex. Look up at Her as being close to your very heart, and call upon Her: "Most speedy Lady Mediatrix, Mary, Mother of God, save me from the enemy—the disturber." And immediately, in an instant, She will save you according to the faith of your heart, according to your soul's trust in Her; and the oppression, the fire, and heavy despondency will fall aside and leave you. It is only necessary to represent to yourself and firmly believe that the Holy Ghost is everywhere, in every place; that He is an incomplex Being, that in Him all heaven is near us, as upon the

[1] Canon to the Guardian Angel.

palm of the hand, with all its angels and saints, so that we have only to call upon the Lord, or upon the Virgin Mother of God, or any saint from the depth of the heart, with clear-sighted faith, with heartfelt repentance for the sins by which we are bound by the enemy or by which we have bound voluntarily ourselves—and our salvation will immediately shine forth. Marvellous is the saving power of our Lady; it flows into the heart like a healing balsam, or like fragrant, life-giving air, or like calming water. Only look on Her with the eyes of your heart, trusting in Her mercy and help. But this, too, is difficult—to look on Her with heartfelt, clear-sighted faith—just as it is difficult to look on the Lord Jesus Christ or the saints; for the enemy endeavours by every means to stand like a hard, high, dark wall between our souls and the Lord, or the Mother of God, the angels and saints. The accursed one does not allow the eye of the heart to see the Lord or His saints; he darkens our heart in every way; he scatters faith, oppressing, burning, and darkening us inwardly. We must look upon all such actions as illusions and falsehood, and break through this imaginary wall to the Lord, or to His Holy Mother, or His saints. As soon as you break through this wall, you will immediately be saved. "Thy faith hath made thee whole."[1]

Say inwardly, from your whole heart: "The Lord is everything to me; I myself am nothing; I am powerless, I am infirm." "For without Me ye can do nothing,"[2] says the Lord Himself, for it might be added: "I am everything to you." Be heartily convinced of this every moment of your life, and have recourse to the Lord absolutely in everything, trusting to obtain from Him everything necessary for your salvation, and even for this temporal life besides.

If the Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, through Her union with God, and through Her unprecedented service to the Lord of all, most speedily becomes everything to all those who ask with faith and love for Her intercession, delivering them from every evil, and bestowing upon them everything which leads to their salvation, in accordance with their prayer, then will not the Lord Himself do still more? Only do not be unbelieving; do not be cold to Him in your soul and insensible as a stone, but stir up within you your faith, your gratitude for God's benefits, the sincere recognition of your sins, and your great love for your Saviour, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, Who loves you with an immeasurable love.

When praying to the Lord, to the Mother of God, or to the

[1] St. Matthew ix. 22. [2] St. John xv. 5.

saints, always remember that the Lord will give you according to your heart. He will "grant thee according to thine own heart."[1] Whatever the heart is, such will be the gift. If you pray with faith, sincerely, with all your heart, not hypocritically, then a gift will be given you by the Lord in accordance with your faith, in accordance with the degree of the fervour of your heart. And, on the contrary, the colder your heart is, the more incredulous and hypocritical it is, the more useless will be your prayer; not only this, the more it will anger the Lord, Who is a Spirit, and seeks to be worshipped in spirit and in truth.[2] Therefore, whether you call upon the Lord Himself, or His Mother, or the angels, or saints, call upon them with all your heart; whether you pray for anyone living or departed, pray for them with your whole heart, pronouncing their names with heartfelt fervour; whether you pray that any spiritual blessing may be granted you or anyone else, that you or anyone near to you may be delivered from any misfortune, or from sins, passions, or bad habits, pray for this with your whole heart, desiring for yourself or others with your whole heart the blessings you pray for, being firmly resolved to forsake, or desiring others to free themselves from sins, passions and sinful habits, and the Lord will grant you the gift according to your heart. "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."[3] You see, therefore, that it is absolutely necessary to wish and long for that which you ask; for then only you will obtain it. "Pray one for another that ye may be healed."[4]

Be kindly disposed in heart, word, and deed, ready at every time to serve others without the slightest vexation or irritability, remembering the words of the Saviour: "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."[5]

Firmly believe that the Lord is at all times everything to you. During prayer He is the power and the fulfilment in the Holy Ghost of each of your words. During pious conversation He is your living water, the ardent flow of your words at all times—He is everything to you. Be free from care in the presence of your Lord. He has enclosed you with Himself upon all sides. He penetrates you wholly and knows all your thoughts, all your needs and inclinations, and if you live in Him with faith and love, then no evil shall befall you. "The Lord is at hand; be careful for nothing."[6]

God, Who alone is, Who is omnipresent, incomplex, can create or transform everything in a single instant, as it was with the wonders of Egypt. The Almighty can do all things.

[1] Psalm xx. 4. [2] St. John iv. 23, 24. [3] St. John xv. 7.
[4] James v. 16. [5] St. Matthew xx. 26. [6] Philippians iv. 6.

Through masterful, or rather through mercenary pride and incomprehensible wickedness, we often do not deign to speak to those whom we feed and support, often behaving inimically to them, instead of rather humbling ourselves before them as their servants, in accordance with the words of the Lord. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant,"[1] so as to redouble our recompense of the Lord by sincerely and unfeignedly serving Him in the person of the least of His brethren. O, meek and humble-hearted Creator, Giver of Life, Redeemer, our Nourisher, and Preserver —Lord Jesus! teach us love, meekness, and humility through Thy Holy Spirit, and strengthen us in those virtues which are most pleasing to Thee, so that Thy rich gifts may not make our hearts proud, so that we may not deem that it is we ourselves who feed, provide, and support anyone. Thou art the universal Nourisher. Thou feedest, providest, supportest, and preservest all; under the wings of Thy mercy, bounty, and loving kindness all are provided for and are given rest—not under ours, for we ourselves have need of being covered with the shadow of Thy wings at every moment of our life. Our eyes are fixed upon Thee, our God, as "the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress: even so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until He have mercy upon us."[2]—Amen.

Be firmly convinced that every word, especially those pronounced during prayer, is realisable, remembering that the author of the word is God the Word, that our God Himself, worshipped in the Holy Trinity, is expressed by the three words or names: The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; that each word has a corresponding being, or that every word can become being and deed. Therefore reverence the word and value it. Remember that the Son of God, as the Personal Word of God, is always united with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the same manner as the Father, as the Supreme Wisdom, participates, by His omnipresence, His creative Word, and the Holy Ghost the Accomplisher in the words of Holy Scripture, or in the prayers or in the writings of the most wise Fathers. This is why no word is vain, but has or should have power in itself. Woe to those who speak idly, for they will have to answer for their idle speaking! "For with God nothing shall be impossible."[3] Power and accomplishment are, in general, the properties of the word. Such should it also be in the mouths of men.

[1] St. Matthew xx. 26. [2] Psalm cxxiii. 2. [3] St. Luke i. 37.

The Holy Ghost accomplishes all wonders and miracles. By the same Spirit power is given to one, and to another works of power. You have only to speak with faith, and need have no anxiety as to the fulfilment of the word; the Holy Ghost will care for this.

Believe firmly that you always think, feel, speak, move, and act in God—so to say, in His bosom: "Dwelleth in Me and I in him."[1] He has enclosed you upon all sides; He penetrates and knows you. "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me,"[2] says the holy prophet and king David. The Mother of God, all the holy angels and all the saints are also in God. What is, therefore, nearer, who can, therefore, be more closely associated with believing Christians than the angels and saints? Therefore, call upon God Himself, the Lord of everything, as well as upon His saints, with faith, hope and love, asking them to intercede before God for you; ask the angels and saints to pray to God for you as you would ask living persons anything for yourself—standing face to face with them, firmly believing that they too stand face to face with your heart.

Always think that you are accursed, poor, needy, blind and naked without God, that God is everything to you: He is your righteousness, your sanctification, your riches, your raiment, your life, your breath—everything.

The Body and the Blood of Christ are pre-eminently body and blood, because in each smallest particle of the Body and the Blood rests the entire Christ-God, filling every part. It is not so in the human body. In the Body and the Blood of Christ every particle, every drop is Christ entire, ever indivisible, One and the Same.

What is mercy? Mercy is to love our enemies, to bless those who curse us, to do good to those who hate us, who do us harm, who drive us away, to defend those who are persecuted, and so on.

God is the most easily approachable and most communicative of Beings in His bounties to all His creatures, especially to reasonable beings. If air and light, owing to their rarity, move and communicate themselves easily to everything that is capable of absorbing or receiving them, then shall not the Lord of all things, the Omnipresent Spirit, All-merciful, Infinite, Almighty, move and communicate Himself infinitely more

[1] St. John vi. 56. [2] Psalm cxxxix. 5.

easily than these inanimate, unintelligent material created things? O! how quickly the Lord helps all those who believe in Him and seek Him! "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."[1] If human nature is communicative, then how much more so is God's nature? If a father and a mother give what is needful to their children, they being men, evil by nature, "then how much more shall your Father, Which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him!"[2] "To do good and to communicate forget not."[3]

If Christ is in you through the frequent communion of the Holy Sacrament, then be yourself wholly like unto Christ: meek, humble, long-suffering, full of love, without attachment to earthly things, meditating upon heavenly ones, obedient, reasonable. Have His spirit unfailingly within you. Do not be proud, impatient, partial to earthly things, avaricious, and covetous.

See God clearly with your spiritual vision, and when thus contemplating Him, ask of Him anything you wish, in the name of Jesus Christ, and it shall be given to you. In one single moment God will be everything to you, for He is an incomplex Being, above any time and space; and in the moments of your true faith, of your heartfelt union with Him, He will accomplish everything for you that is necessary for your own salvation, or for that of your neighbour, and you yourself will at that time be a participant of the divinity, through most sincere union with Him: "I have said ye are gods."[4] At such a time there is no interval between God and you, there will be no interval, either, between your word and the realisation of it: as soon as you speak it will be realised, just as God Himself "spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."[5] This is equally true both in regard to the sacraments, as in general in regard to spiritual prayer. Besides this, in the sacraments everything is accomplished for the sake of the grace of the priesthood with which the priest is invested, for the sake of the great High Priest Himself—Christ, Whose image the priest bears upon himself. Therefore, although some priests are even unworthy of their office, though they may have weaknesses, though they may be suspicious, incredulous, or distrustful, nevertheless God's Mystery is speedily accomplished, in the twinkling of an eye.

God the Father—acting in our mind and heart through His Personal Word (expressed in our word by the Holy Ghost,

[1] St. John iii. 8. [2] St. Matthew vii. 11. [3] Hebrews xiii. 16.
[4] Psalm lxxxii. 5. [5] Psalm xxxiii. 9; cxlviii. 6.

resting in the Personal Word), and through our word of faith, trust, meekness, and love proceeding from our lips—accomplishes in an instant, once for all, the wonderful acts predetermined since the creation of the world, of our regeneration, sanctification, strengthening, spiritual nourishment, and healing in Christ; although the preparatory rites for these actions are very prolonged, for God is an incomplex, Almighty Being. For instance, the change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is accomplished immediately after the utterance of the words: "Make this bread the precious Body of Thy Christ, and that which is in this cup the precious Blood of Thy Christ, changing them by Thy Holy Ghost." After these last words, and after the blessing, with the sign of the cross with the hand, the bread and wine are instantaneously changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, but not before; for the divine Omnipotence awaits the word of the priest co-operating with It. "For we are labourers together with God."[1] The blessing at this time, by the sign of the cross in the name of the Lord, signifies that the mystery is accomplished by the Holy Ghost in the name of Jesus Christ, and for the sake of Jesus Christ, at His intercession, by the favour of God the Father.

During the celebration of divine service and the sacraments the servant of God should be firmly convinced that whatever he thinks and says will be accomplished. It is so easy for the Lord to fulfil our requests, to create or to change anything in accordance with our words. Let this conviction be as easy and natural to you as your breathing the air, as seeing with your eyesight, as hearing with your ears. You have a thousand times experienced upon yourself that this is really so; you have yourself experienced that there is no interval of time between the words: "Spake, and it was done; commanded, and it stood fast;"[2] that they are true in all their power. Absorb this conviction into yourself with your food and drink—with your breathing.

The Liturgy is the supper, the table of God's love to mankind. Around the Lamb of God upon the holy disc all are at this time assembled—the living and the dead, saints and sinners, the Church triumphant and the Church militant.

There is nothing impossible unto those who believe; lively and unshaken faith can accomplish great miracles in the twinkling of an eye. Besides, even without our sincere and firm faith, miracles are accomplished, such as the miracles of the sacraments; for God's Mystery is always accomplished, even

[1] 1 Corinthians iii. 9. [2] Psalm xxxiii. 9.

though we were incredulous or unbelieving at the time of its celebration. "Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?"[1] Our wickedness shall not overpower the unspeakable goodness and mercy of God; our dulness shall not overpower God's wisdom, nor our infirmity God's omnipotence.

The Church is the eternal truth, because she is united with the truth, with Christ, and is animated by the spirit of truth: "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[2] "His Body . . . which is the Church,"[3] says the Apostle.

You who are full of iniquities must thirst to suffer every iniquity from other people, so that "the judgment of God according to truth"[4] may be manifested upon you in your present life. "With what measure ye mete," to your Lord and your neighbour, "it shall be measured to you again."[5] Bear always in mind the example of that most righteous man, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who, being righteous, yet suffered every iniquity from men, was lifted up upon the cross, and died the most shameful death.

Do not be faint-hearted, and do not despair when men hate you for revealing their ways, but rejoice the more, remembering the words of the Saviour: "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you."[6]

Man builds himself a house, and lives in it; the animal a lair, and lives in it; the bird a nest, and hatches its young ones; the bee a hive with honeycomb, and lives in it, preparing honey for itself; the spider weaves a web, and, living in it, catches food for itself by means of it. Was it not, therefore, fitting that the Creator should build Himself a house not made with hands—His Body—as He built it in the womb of the Virgin Mother, as He even now creates temples for His Body in the life-giving mysteries—the Creator, Who has built and continues to build bodily houses for all sentient or sentiently-spiritual creatures?

The priesthood, or in general holy men, are sacred reservoirs, from which the beneficial water is communicated to other believers. "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."[7]

How pure and spiritual should be the lips of priests, who so often pronounce the most holy name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost! How still more spiritual and pure should

[1] Romans iii. 3. [2] St. Matthew xxviii. 20. [3] Colossians i. 24.
[4] Romans ii. 3. [5] St. Matthew vii. 2.
[6] St. Luke vi. 22. [7] St. John vii. 38.

be their hearts to contain and feel in themselves the sweetness of this most precious, glorious, and justly-worshipped name! O, how far a priest should withdraw himself from carnal delights, so as not to become flesh, in which the spirit of God cannot dwell! What carnal delights can there be for a priest, when he must absolutely delight in the Lord alone, so that He may grant him the petitions of his heart? What carnal delights can there be for a priest when he has so many spiritual children disclosing to him their various spiritual or bodily infirmities, with which he must heartily sympathise, concerning which he must give sincere and wholesome advice; when he must each day wrestle in prayer for them with his whole heart and with tears before the Lord, that the mental wolf may not fall upon them and ravish them, that God may grant that they may prosper in life and faith, and in spiritual wisdom? What carnal delights can there be for a priest when he must often perform the services in the church and stand before the altar of the Lord; when he has so often to celebrate the divine and most-wonderful Liturgy, and to be the celebrant and partaker of the heavenly, immortal, and life-giving Mysteries; when, in general, he has so often to celebrate sacraments and prayers? The heart that loves carnal delights is unfaithful to the Lord. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."[1]

"Ye shall know them by their fruits."[2] By the most sweet, most blessed, and life-giving fruits of the Liturgy—the most pure Mysteries of the Body and Blood of the Lord—you will recognise that it is from God, the inspiration of the divine Spirit, and that this most holy, life-giving Spirit breathes in all its prayers and sacred rites. What a wonderful living tree is this divine Liturgy! What leaves it has! What fruits it bears! Not only the fruits, but even "The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."[3] For who has not received great spiritual benefit, peace, and blessedness into his soul from only devoutly assisting at the divine Liturgy! And that which brings forth good fruits must be in itself good; such is the law of creation.

One of the most powerful wiles of the Devil is to weaken the heart through slothfulness, and with it all the spiritual and bodily powers. At such times faith, hope, and love are dried up in the heart; we become faithless, despondent, insensible towards God and men: the salt has lost its savour.

Only feel sincerely the need of that for which you pray and believe that every good and perfect gift comes from God

[1] St. Matthew vi. 24. [2] St. Matthew vii. 16. [3] Revelation xxii. 2.

and not from men—not by chance, not through circumstances nor fate; that God sees and hears all your needs, every movement of your heart and of your thoughts; that He is all-good, Almighty, most wise, and that He can easily accomplish in an instant, by a single movement of His thought, through the Son in His Holy Spirit, everything that you need—and you will obtain everything. For although many things are impossible with men, they are not so with God: "For with God all things are possible."[1]

Trust in prayer consists in uttering the petitions, thanksgivings, and praise with faith in the presence of God, and of His hearing them; and with the fear of God, not doubting, nor being in the least uneasy as to their acceptance and fulfilment, but in absolute assurance that God has heard them and accepted them upon His heavenly and mental Altar; and that, in accordance with the desire of our Mother the Church (if we pray in the name of the Church), as well as of our own heart, He will give us, as the all-good Almighty and most wise, all that we ask, and more abundantly than we ask or mean. But the heart that has a partiality for food and drink, that is greedy for these, and is weakened by them, has not such trust; neither the heart in which hatred and animosity are concealed, nor that is bound by avarice, covetousness, and envy, until it puts away its infirmities and amends itself.

In signing ourselves with the sign of the cross, with the three fingers we lay the upper end of the cross upon the forehead as an emblem of God the Father, Who is the uncreated Wisdom; the lower end of the cross upon the bosom as an emblem of the Son Who was begotten of the Father before all worlds, and which is in the bosom of the Father; and the transverse part upon the shoulders as an emblem of the Holy Ghost, Which is the arm or the power of God, or the hand of the Lord, as has been said: "To whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed;"[2] or: "The hand of the Lord was there upon me;"[3] that is, the Holy Ghost. There is, besides, an image of the Holy Trinity in man himself. The thinking mind is the image of God the Father; the heart, in which wisdom dwells and expresses itself, is the image of God the Son, the Personal wisdom of God; the lips, through which that which is in the thoughts and in the heart proceeds, are the image of the Holy Ghost. "He breathed on them, and said unto them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. . . ."[4] When "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications . . . blasphemies. . . ."[5]

[1] St. Mark x. 27. [2] St. John xii. 38; Isaiah liii. 1.
[3] Ezekiel iii. 22. [4] St. John xx. 22. [5] St. Matthew xv. 19.

then it is the evil spirit nestling in man's heart which comes forth; but when "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good,"[1] then that is the image of the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father through the Son. How great, therefore, is man! It has not been said in vain: "I have said ye are gods, and ye are all children of the most Highest."[2] "If He called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken [that is, if it has been said, then it must be true, immutable], say ye of Him Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God."[3] O, the dignity! O, the greatness of man! Do not look upon any man, especially upon a Christian, otherwise than as upon the son of God, and receive him as the son of God, converse with him, behave with him as with the son of God, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A certain person who was sick unto death from inflammation of the bowels for nine days, without having obtained the slightest relief from medical aid, as soon as he had communicated of the Holy Sacrament, upon the morning of the ninth day, regained his health, and rose from his bed of sickness in the evening of the same day. He received the Holy Communion with firm faith. I prayed to the Lord to cure him. "Lord," said I, "heal Thy servant of his sickness. He is worthy, therefore grant him this. He loves Thy priests, and sends them his gifts." I also prayed for him in church before the altar of the Lord, at the Liturgy, during the prayer: "Thou Who hast given us grace at this time, with one accord to make our common supplication unto Thee," and before the most Holy Mysteries themselves. I prayed in the following words: "Lord, our life! It is as easy for Thee to cure every malady as it is for me to think of healing. It is as easy for Thee to raise every man from the dead as it is for me to think of the possibility of the resurrection from the dead. Cure, then, Thy servant Basil of his cruel malady, and do not let him die; do not let his wife and children be given up to weeping." And the Lord graciously heard, and had mercy upon him, although he was within a hair's-breadth of death. Glory to Thine omnipotence and mercy, that Thou, Lord, hast vouchsafed to hear me!

The heart can change several times in one moment—to good or evil, to faith or unbelief, to simplicity or cunning, to love or hatred, to benevolence or envy, to generosity or avarice,

[1] St. Luke vi. 45. [2] Psalm lxxxii. 6. [3] St. John x. 35, 36.

to chastity or fornication. O, what inconstancy! O, how many dangers! O, how sober and watchful we must be!

Do not rejoice when your countenance is bright from pleasant food and drink, because then the inward face of your soul is hideous and deadly, and at that time the words of the Saviour Christ are applicable to you: "For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which, indeed, appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones"[1]—that is, of hypocrisy and iniquity.

How many times already, O Master, Lord Jesus, hast Thou renewed my nature, heedlessly corrupted by my sins! There is no measure and number to this. How many times hast Thou saved me from the furnace burning within me, from the furnace of many and diverse passions, from the abyss of despondency and despair! How many times hast Thou renewed my depraved heart, when only I have called upon Thy Name with faith! How many times hast Thou accomplished this through the life-giving Holy Sacrament! O Lord! in truth there is no number and measure of Thy mercies unto me, a sinner. What shall I offer to Thee, or what can I render unto Thee for Thine innumerable benefits to me, Jesus, my life and my lightness? May I be prudent in my ways, according to Thy grace; for "blessed are those that are undefiled in the way,"[2] as Thou hast said, through the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our forefather, David. I will endeavour to be faithful unto Thee, to be humble, meek, not irritable, gentle, forbearing, industrious, merciful, generous, not covetous, obedient.

Alms-giving is good and salutary when to it is united the amendment of the heart from pride, malice, envy, slothfulness, indolence, gluttony, fornication, falsehood, deceitfulness, and other sins. But if the man is not careful to amend his heart, trusting only to his alms, then he will obtain but little benefit from them, for he builds with one hand and destroys with the other.

The children Paul and Olga, by the infinite mercy of the Lord, in accordance with mine unworthy prayer, have been cured of the spirit of infirmity by which they were attacked. In the case of the child Paul, his malady passed away through sleep, and the child Olga became quiet in spirit, and her little face grew bright instead of dark and troubled. Nine times I went to pray with bold trust, hoping my trust might not be

[1] St. Matthew xxiii. 27, 28. [2] Psalm cxix. 1; xviii. 21; and others.

shamed; that to him that knocketh it would be opened; that even on account of my importunity, God would fulfil my requests; that if the unjust judge at last satisfied the woman who troubled him, then still more the Judge of all, the most righteous Judge, would satisfy my sinful prayer for the innocent children; that He would consider my labour, my intercession, my prayerful words, my kneeling, my boldness, my trust in Him. And the Lord did so; He did not cover me, a sinner, with shame. I came for the tenth time to their home, and the children were well. I gave thanks unto the Lord and to our most speedy Mediatrix.

"That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us."[1] What separates us from God and each other? Money, food, and drink —this dust, this dross, this corruption. Why? Because we have not living Christian trust and faith in God. We do not know, or we forget, that man's true life is love for God and his neighbour. Setting our life upon dust and trusting in it, we do not render to the Heavenly Father the glory that is due to Him, by putting our whole trust in Him, by casting all our care upon Him, as His faithful children in Christ should do. "If then I be a Father, where is Mine honour?"[2] Where is your trust in Me? Where is your love for Me? Where is your detachment from earthly, corrupt things, and your hearty desire for the heavenly, spiritual, and eternal ones?

While I live, then the flesh is mine own, because my spirit lives in it; but when I die, the flesh is no longer mine, but belongs to God and to the earth: "The earth is the Lord's and all that therein is."[3] "For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return."[4] "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood."[5] These words also signify that I myself wholly dwell in these two forms of the Communion—in the flesh and blood; that they are mine by their close association with me, as the flesh and blood of the man, with the soul of the man dwelling in them; for the soul penetrates all the body and all the blood.

How many times death entered into my heart, communicating its beginning to the body also an innumerable number of times! And yet the Lord delivered me from this state of death, was merciful to me with unspeakable mercy, and gave me new life. O, how full of gratitude to the Lord my heart should be! "If the Lord had not helped me, it had not failed, but my soul had been put to silence."[6]

[1] St. John xvii. 21. [2] Malachi i. 6. [3] Psalm xxiv. 1.
[4] Genesis iii. 9. [5] St. John vi. 54. [6] Psalm xciv. 17.

Our flesh becomes depressed and downcast when it is subjected to any infirmities; whilst when it is in good health and enjoys carnal pleasures, then it rejoices, leaps, and gets beyond itself. We must pay no attention to the delusive feelings of the flesh, and, in general, must disdain every carnal amusement and delight; we must bear with equanimity the afflictions and maladies of the flesh, take courage and set our trust upon God.

Why is impatience in some small, unimportant matter, one single movement of the heart towards impatience, already a sin and is immediately inwardly punished? Likewise, why is every momentary movement of the heart towards sin considered as a sin and immediately punished? Because impatience in a small matter is an earnest of impatience in great and important matters; for the soul of man is incomplex, and one single inclination of the heart towards sin is already a sin. And therefore, as every small, unimportant sin leads to great ones, it is always punished at its very beginning and must be crushed. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."[1] And how great are these many things! "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."[2]

When praying, endeavour by every means to feel in your heart the truth and the power of the words of the prayer; feed yourself upon them as upon an imperishable food; water your heart with them as with a dew; and warm yourself by them as by means of a beneficial fire.

The Lord is everything to me: He is the strength of my heart and the light of my intellect. He inclines my heart to everything good; He strengthens it; He also gives me good thoughts; He is my rest and my joy; He is my faith, hope and love; He is my food and drink, my raiment, my dwelling place. As a mother is everything to her infant—its mind, will, sight, hearing, taste, smelling and feeling, as well as its food and drink, its clothing, hands and feet—so, likewise, the Lord is everything to me, when I yield myself wholly unto Him. But, alas! when I fall away from the Lord, then the Devil enters into me, and if I did not turn my heart's gaze towards the Lord, did I not, amidst the enemy's oppression, call upon the Lord for help, then the Devil would have been, as he sometimes is, very evil to me:

[1] St. Matthew xxv. 21. [2] 1 Corinthians ii. 9.

malice, despondency, perfect feebleness towards everything good, despair, hatred, envy, avarice, blasphemous, wicked and impure thoughts, contempt for everything—in short, he would have been, and sometimes is, my intellect, my will, sight, hearing, taste, smell, feeling, my hands and feet. Therefore, put your trust in the Lord. He is that which is, infinite in holiness, omnipotence, grace, mercy, bountifulness, and wisdom.

When your flesh suffers through maladies, remember that it is the greatest enemy of your salvation that suffers, that is weakened by these sufferings, and bear them bravely in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who for our sakes endured the cross and suffered death; also, remember that all our maladies are God's punishment for sins; they cleanse us, they reconcile us with God and lead us back to His love. Grant us "Thy peace," it is said, "and Thy love, as Thou hast granted us all things." Remember, that during your illness the Lord Himself is with you ("I am with him in trouble"[1]); that it has proceeded from a sign of the Master, punishing us as a father. You who believe in the time of your welfare, see that you do not fall away from God in the time of misfortune, but, like the martyrs, be constant in faith, hope, and love.

God is an incomplex, most perfect Being, that is, the purest holiness, the purest good and truth; and in order to be in union with God, in order to be one spirit with Him (for we are from Him), we must acquire, through His grace, the most perfect simplicity of goodness, holiness, and love. All the saints who are in heaven were cleansed by the blood of the Son of God, through the Holy Ghost, and have not a shadow of sin in them. It was for this that they struggled in this life, that they mortified their flesh in order to cleanse themselves "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,"[2] in order to become eternally united with that most glorious Being; it is for this reason also that the Holy Church with all her institutions now exists upon earth, the hierarchy, the Divine services, the sacraments, the rites; fasts were likewise appointed in order to cleanse and sanctify the children of God, in order to unite them with that most blessed Being, glorified in the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

You ask the Lord that you may love Him with a love, strong as death, or until death. Suppose, now, that the Lord sends you a terrible inward disease that may bring you nigh unto death itself. Do not, then, murmur against the Lord, but bear it bravely, thanking the Lord for His fatherly visitation, and this

[1] Psalm xci. 15. [2] 2 Corinthians vii. 1.

will show that what you call your love for God is strong as death. And during the most violent fits or spasms of your illness trust in God, that He has the power to save you, not only from suffering, but even from death itself, should it please Him to do so. Do not spare, do not cherish your perishable body, but give it up willingly and wholly to the Lord, as Abraham gave his son Isaac as an holocaust, to the will of the Lord Who punishes you—not losing faith in God's goodness, not growing despondent, not foolishly accusing God of injustice for so severely chastising you—and you will thus offer a great sacrifice unto God, like Abraham or like the martyrs.

Let that which tranquillises my thoughts and my heart be committed to writing as a memorial to me of the constant peace of my heart amidst the cares and vanities of life. What is it? It is the Christian saying, full of living trust and wonderful soothing power: "The Lord is everything to me." This is the priceless treasure! This is the precious jewel, possessing which we can be calm in every condition, rich in poverty, generous and kind to other people in the time of our wealth, and not losing hope even after having sinned. "The Lord is everything to me." He is my faith, my trust, my love, my strength, my power, my peace, my joy, my riches, my food, my drink, my raiment, my life, in a word, mine all. Thus, man, the Lord is everything to you; and you must be everything to the Lord. And, as all your treasure is contained in your heart and in your will, and God requires from you your heart, having said: "My son, give Me thine heart,"[1] therefore, in order to fulfil God's gracious and perfect will, renounce your own corrupt, passionate, seductive, will; do not know your own will, know only God's will. "Not my will, but Thy will be done."

There is absolutely nothing for a Christian to be proud of in accomplishing works of righteousness, for he is saved, and is being constantly saved, from every evil through faith alone, in the same manner as he accomplishes works of righteousness also by the same faith. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that (faith itself) not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."[2] So that no one can be proud of anything.

It is only when we pray fervently, only then that we feel calm, warm, at ease, and bright in soul, because then we are with God and in God; but as soon as we cease thus praying, then temptations and various troubles begin. O, most blessed time of prayer!

[1] Proverbs xxiii. 26. [2] Ephesians ii. 8, 9.

Love for God begins to manifest itself and act in us when we begin to love our neighbour as ourselves, and not to spare either ourselves or anything belonging to us for him, as the image of God; when we endeavour to serve him for his salvation in everything that we can; when, for the sake of pleasing God, we refuse to gratify our appetites, our carnal vision, our carnal wisdom, which is not subjected to the wisdom of God. "For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, Whom he hath not seen?"[1] "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts."[2]

Ask the Lord for whatever you desire. God the Father has but to desire to accomplish your request. The Son, the Creator, and the Holy Ghost, the Accomplisher, being always with Him and in Him, as He Himself is in Them, are always ready to accomplish the desire of the Almighty and All-good Father; for They Themselves are one with Him in goodness and omnipotence.

You ought not to keep God's gifts to yourself, but should diffuse them upon others. Nature herself is an example to you; the sun does not keep the light to itself, but diffuses it upon the earth and moon. Pastors especially ought not to keep their—or, rather, God's—light to themselves, but should abundantly diffuse the light of their intelligence and knowledge upon others.

With what are our hearts occupied? God, "Who trieth the very hearts and reins,"[3] sees what each one of us has in his heart, to what it is attached during the greater part of life; and if the Lord had given us the capability of seeing all the depths of the human heart, then our eyes would have turned away with horror from the mass of impurities within: adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, pride, and others. What abomination we should have beheld: the abomination of ingratitude to God, of forgetfulness of God, of unbelief, of little faith, of manifold attachments to earthly things, often the most absurd ones, of carelessness for heavenly things, of our own lot after death, of inattention and neglect of the Church, of her services, rites, and institutions, of contempt for the clergy, the representatives of religion and the Church, and every other abomination!

It is impossible to represent and to think of the cross

[1] St John iv. 20. [2] Galatians v. 24. [3] Psalm vii. 10.

without love. Where the cross is, there is love; in the church you see crosses everywhere and upon everything, in order that everything should remind you that you are in the temple of the God of love, in the temple of love itself, crucified for us.

People say that if you feel no inclination to pray, it is better not to pray; but this is crafty, carnal sophistry. If you only pray when you are inclined to, you will completely cease praying; this is what the flesh desires. "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence."[1] You will not be able to work out your salvation without forcing yourself.

In educating, it is extremely dangerous to only develop the understanding and intellect, and not pay attention to the heart. We must, above all, pay attention to the heart, for the heart is life, but life corrupted by sin. It is necessary to purify this source of life, to kindle in it the pure flame of life, so that it should burn and not be extinguished; and should direct all the thoughts, desires, and tendencies of the man through all his life. Society is corrupted precisely through the want of Christian education. It is time that Christians should understand the Lord, should understand what He requires of us; namely, a pure heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart."[2] Listen to His sweetest voice in the Gospel. The true life of our heart is Christ ("Christ liveth in me"[3]). Let all of you learn wisdom of the Apostle. This should be our common problem: to bring Christ to dwell in our hearts through faith.

These hands, that like to take gifts, shall be folded upon the breast and shall take no more; these feet, that like to walk for evil, and that do not like to stand in prayer, shall be stretched out for ever, and shall not go anywhere more; these eyes, that look enviously upon the prosperity of their neighbour, shall close, their fire shall be dimmed for ever, and nothing shall charm them again; the hearing, so often open to listen with pleasure to evil speaking and calumny, shall be deadened, and no thunders even will be audible to it. It shall only hear the trumpet raising the dead, when our incorruptible body shall rise, either "unto the resurrection of life or unto the resurrection of damnation."[4] What, then, will live in us, even after our death, and what should be the object of all our care during our present life? That which we now call the heart, that is, the inward man, our soul;

[1] St. Matthew xi. 12.
[2] St. Matthew v. 8.
[3] Galatians ii. 20.
[4] St. John v. 9.

it should be the object of our solicitude. Cleanse your heart during all your life, so that it, or your soul, may be capable of seeing God afterwards; only care for your body and its requirements as much as is necessary for maintaining its health, power, and decency. It will all die; the earth will bear it all away. Strive, therefore, to perfect within you that which loves and hates, that which is calm or disturbed, which rejoices or grieves—that is, your heart or your inward man, which thinks and reasons through your intellect.

Men throughout all their earthly life see everything but Christ, the life-giver; this is why they have no spiritual life, this is why they are given to every passion: unbelief, want of faith, covetousness, envy, hatred, ambition, the pleasures of eating and drinking. It is only at the close of their life that they seek Christ through the Holy Communion, and even this out of crying necessity and as a custom usual amongst others. O Christ, our God, our Life and Resurrection! How low have we fallen in our vanity, how blind have we become! But how would it have been with us had we always sought Thee, had we always had Thee in our hearts? The tongue cannot express the bliss which those experience who have Thee in their hearts! Unto them Thou art strengthening food, inexhaustible drink, shining raiment, the sun, "the peace which passeth all understanding,"[1] unutterable joy, and everything. Possessing Thee, all earthly things become dust and corruption.

"It is the Spirit that quickeneth."[2] It is to the Spirit of the Lord in creatures that their animation belongs, since the time of their creation, and to the Son of God their creation, the bringing of them into existence from non-existence. This is also how the Body and the Blood of Christ are transubstantiated by the Holy Ghost from the bread and wine, in the same manner as a body was created by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Most-pure Virgin from Her blood. The Holy Ghost creates us in the womb of our mother; it is to the Spirit of God that we owe our spiritual blessings.

The kingdom of life and the kingdom of death go side by side. I say go, because they are spiritual. The Chief of the first—that is, of the kingdom of life—is Jesus Christ, and those who are with Christ are undoubtedly in the kingdom of life; the chief of the second—that is, of the kingdom of death—is the prince of the powers of the air—

[1] Philippians iv. 7. [2] St. John vi. 63.

the Devil, with the spirits of evil subject to him, of which there are so many that their number far exceeds the number of all men dwelling upon earth. These children of death, the subjects of the prince of the air, are in constant stubborn warfare with the children of life—that is, with faithful Christians—and strive by every crafty means to win them over to their side, through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, because sin and crime are their elements, and through sins, if we do not repent of them, we pass over to their side; whilst those to whom sins form as though an every-day requirement, who drink in iniquity like water, are not disturbed by the spirits of evil, because they already belong to them as long as they live carelessly in regard to their souls. But as soon as they turn to God, acknowledging their sins, both voluntary and involuntary, the war bursts forth, and the hordes of Satan rise up and carry on an unceasing fight. You see by this how necessary it is to seek Christ, as the Chief of the kingdom of life, and the Conqueror of hell and death.

Every affliction and oppression arises either from want of faith or from some passion concealing itself within the man, or from some other impurity visible to the Almighty, and shows that the Devil is in the heart, and that Christ is not in the heart. Christ is the peace, the freedom, and the ineffable light of the soul.

The air, the blowing of the wind, the breathing of creatures in the material world correspond to the spirits in the spiritual world, and to the uncreated, all life-giving Spirit of God itself. This is why the Spirit manifested itself as "a rushing mighty wind,"[1] this is why also the Saviour compares "the breathing of the Spirit in the souls of those who are born of the Spirit,"[2] to the blowing of wind. In the material world there are many things that correspond to those of the spiritual world, because the material world is also the creation of the Spirit; and cannot the creating Spirit in part show His image and His affinity in the creatures created by Him? Man is only the highest possible image of God amongst creatures, partakers of matter and purely material.

Kissing with the lips corresponds to kissing with the soul; and when we kiss holy things, we ought to kiss them with the soul and heart as well as the lips.

The Lord rules wonderfully and mightily over material

[1] Acts ii. 2. [2] St. John iii. 8.

worlds by means of His wisdom, by means of His word. As the particles of the body of an animal, of a tree, of grass, of stone are held together by cohesion, so all the worlds are held together by the powers and laws laid in them. As the soul carries the body and gives life to it, so also God carries the world, giving life to it through His Holy Spirit; it is not without reason that a man is called a little world.

What an insignificant cobweb the world must be to God! What an insignificant cobweb is my body! And yet all is wisdom in every point of matter, and all stands only by wisdom, by the eternal laws of wisdom. O, wisdom, wisdom! We all owe our being to thee, to thy merciful Author! My death, my decomposition or destruction, clearly proves what an insignificant cobweb thou hast in me.

Glory to Thee, life-giving Father, life-giving Son, and life-giving Holy Ghost, incomplex Being—God; ever saving us from the spiritual death caused to our soul by passions. Glory to Thee, Lord, in three persons, who enlightenest the dark face of our soul and body, and bestowest upon us Thy peace, which exceeds every earthly and physical good, and surpasses all understanding.

Pray without ceasing, calling upon the name of the life-giving Trinity in order that your soul should not be suddenly overwhelmed by any passion, pride, or envy, or malice and hatred, or avarice, or covetousness, or gluttony, or anger and irritability, or harsh judgment or scorn, or falsehood and calumny, or any such passion; for we walk amongst snares every hour, every minute of our life. Let the eyes of your heart be on guard every hour, every minute. Let your heart be watchful, not only during the day, but also during the night, in accordance with the Scripture. "I sleep, but my heart waketh."[1]

We must love our neighbour still more when he sins against God, or against ourselves, because then he is sick, because then he is in spiritual misfortune, in danger; then, especially, we must have compassion upon him, pray for him, and apply to his heart a healing plaster—a word of kindness, instruction, reproval, consolation, forgiveness, love. "Forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."[2] All sins and passions, quarrels and disputes, are truly spiritual diseases; that is how we must look upon them. Or, all passions are a fire of the soul, a great fire, raging inwardly; a fire proceeding from the abyss of hell. It must be extinguished by the water of love, which is

[1] Solomon's Song v. 2. [2] Ephesians iv. 32.

strong enough to extinguish every infernal flame of malice and of other passions. But woe and misfortune to us, to our self-love, if we increase this flame by a fresh infernal flame, by our own malice and irritability, and thus make ourselves the assistants of the spirits of evil, ever endeavouring to inflame the souls of men by means of many and various passions. If we do so, we ourselves shall deserve the fire of Gehenna; and if we do not repent, and do not become in future wise unto good and simple unto evil, then we shall be condemned, together with the Devil and his angels, to torments in the lake of fire. Therefore, do not let us be overcome of evil, but let us overcome evil with good. How accursed are we men! How is it that we have not yet learned to consider every sin as a great misfortune for our soul, and not to pity, heartily, sincerely, lovingly, those who fall into such a misfortune. Why do we not flee from it as from poison, as from a serpent? Why do we linger in it? Why have we no pity upon ourselves, too, when we are subjected to any sin? Why do we not weep before the Lord, who created us?

The Lord allows us to be tossed by various passions in this life in order that we may hate these passions with all our heart, that we may look upon everything earthly as nothing, however precious and pleasant it may appear, and that we may long with all our hearts for God alone, the source of tranquillity and life, may cling to Him alone, may value Him before everything, His holy will, His peace and joy.

You feel straitened upon earth from all sides. Everything betrays you; your relations, friends, acquaintances, riches, the pleasures of the senses, your own body; all the elements—earth, water, fire, air, light—play you false. Cling, therefore, to God alone, "with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,"[1] Who alone is Love.

It is remarkable that some irritable people, after an agony of violent and prolonged anger, and after having experienced all its torments, become, as they say, silky, meek, and peaceable. The same applies to the other passions. The Lord Himself has pointed out that their punishment lies in themselves—in their extreme agony. Pride, envy, hatred, avarice, covetousness—all are thus punished. Each passion is its own tormentor, and at the same time the executioner of each man possessed with it.

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness; without which no man shall see the Lord."[2] Do not break peace for the sake of

[1] James i. 17. [2] Hebrews xii. 14.

anything perishable and transitory, for the sake of your sinful self-love. Love peace above everything—as the Lord Himself. Let nothing be dearer than peace and mutual love. Let us love peace—peace, peace!

The human soul is a free power, for it can become either a power for good or evil, according to the direction which you yourself give it. Lord, Almighty Power! strengthen mine infirm soul in every virtue! Stablish my heart, weak for everything good, upon the immovable rock of Thy commandments! Lord, I daily recognise, through experience, that without Thee I myself am nothing; that without Thee I can do no good; without Thee evil in its various forms is alone within me; without Thee I am the son of perdition. O unspeakably Good One, fill my heart with Thy goodness! But above all, I pray Thee, grant that I may love Thee with all my heart and my neighbour as myself. Grant that I may be neither malicious, proud, presumptuous, nor disobedient, but grant that I may be gentle, humble, tenderly respectful, and obedient. Amen.

O, how carefully do the Devil and the world sow their tares in Christ's cornfield, which is the Church of God. Instead of the Word of God, the word of the world, the word of vanity, is sown. Instead of the temple of God, the world has invented its own temples—the temples of the world's vanities—theatres, circuses, assemblies. Instead of holy icons, which worldly people do not accept, in the world there are painted and photographic portraits, illustrations, and various other pictures. Instead of God and the Saints, the world honours unto adoration its own celebrities—writers, actors, singers, painters, who command general confidence and respect up to reverence. Poor Christians! they have completely fallen away from Christ! Instead of spiritual raiment, every attention is paid in the world to perishable clothing, to fashionable dresses, and various exquisite ornaments, both splendid and costly.

In sickness and, in general, during bodily infirmity, as well as in affliction, a man cannot in the beginning burn with faith and love for God, because in affliction and sickness the heart aches, whilst faith and love require a sound heart, a calm heart. This is why we must not very much grieve if during sickness and affliction we cannot believe in God, love Him, and pray to Him fervently as we ought to. Everything has its proper time. There may be an unfavourable time even for praying.

Behave to your neighbour with a perfect heart—that is, truthfully and with the same love as you would have for your own self, so that your neighbour, on his part, may love you in return; and even if he does not love you, he will at least respect in you your virtue, will honour it, and will himself emulate it.

Would a beggar, who is fed upon crumbs from his master's table, be proud of being fed upon his crumbs? What is there for him to be proud of? Of his poverty? The beggar is myself, the master is the Lord; the crumbs from His table are all beneficial and natural gifts.

What is the sign that a Christian man is near to Christ? The man who is near to Christ often turns with faith and love to Christ; often pronounces His sweetest name; often calls upon Him for help; often turns his eyes, thoughts, and heart towards Him. Christ the Lord naturally reveals Himself upon his lips and in his glance, because without Christ he is powerless, joyless. The man who is far from Christ seldom, very seldom, turns his thoughts towards Christ, and even then not with hearty faith and love, but only through some necessity, and as to a person who is little known to him, who does not rejoice him, does not delight his heart, and who has no attraction for him. This is why we see that those who are near to Christ do not let Christ out of their thoughts and heart; they live in Him; He is their breath, food, drink, dwelling—everything. Through the sweetness of His name and His beneficial touch they, so to say, cleave to Him with their whole being: "My soul hangeth upon Thee."[1] And in this cleaving they find unspeakable bliss, which the world does not know. Such are the signs by which it may be recognised who has found Christ and who has not yet found Him. Those who have not found Christ live in this life without hearty faith; they think and care more about worldly things—how to enjoy themselves, how to eat and drink pleasurably, how to dress exquisitely, how to satisfy their carnal desires, how to kill time, with which they do not know what to do, though time seeks them and, not finding them, quickly flies away before their eyes. Day flies away after day, night after night, month after month, year after year, until, finally, the last terrible hour strikes, and they hear a voice: "Stop, the course is finished; your time has been lost; your sins and iniquities have preceded you; they will fall upon you with all their power, and will crush you with their weight eternally."

[1] Psalm lxiii. 9.

What does to seek distraction mean? It means to wish to somehow fill the sickly emptiness of the soul, which was created for activity, and which cannot bear to be idle.

Let all knowledge relating to religion or faith be as though always new to you, that is, having the same importance, holiness, and interest.

The Lord is the perfect Owner and Master of all creatures; and we know that His commands and His will are obeyed by all creatures: by the angels and by men having understanding hearts; by heaven, earth, and all that is in them, even by hell and all that is therein. He commands the angels, and they hasten to fulfil His will; He commands them to be guardians of new-born men, and they guard them during all their life, not transgressing His commands in anything. He commands the heavens, and they either give forth rain and dew, or snow and hail, or keep them back; He commands the winds, the waters, and they obey Him; He commands the fire, and it obeys Him; He commands the sun, and it is obscured or shines upon everything under it, warming and lighting it; He commands the earth, and it germinates various kinds of plants; He commands it to cease growing, and the growth ceases; He commanded the waters to flow unrestrainably upon the earth, and they did so, as in the time of the universal deluge; He commands the winds, and they blow, they rage furiously, and sometimes become destructive, as a punishment for our sins; He commanded the sea-whale to devour the prophet Jonah, and it was ready to seize him; He commanded the fishes to fill His disciples' nets, and the fishes rushed into the nets, rushed to obey the Creator's commands; He commands the dead to rise, to live again, and death flees from the man and life again appears in him; He commands the disease to leave a sick man, and the disease departs, and the sick man rises up healthy and sound; He commands the demons, and they obey incontestably. Great is the name of the Lord, praised be the name of the Lord, most glorious is the name of the Lord! He can change at His pleasure the objects created by Him; for instance, water into blood, water into wine, a rod into a living serpent; or, again, a rod into a living tree, a man into a pillar, as in the case of Lot's wife; a serpent into gold, and, again, gold into a serpent, as the Lord did at the prayer of St. Spiridon of Trimiphunt.[1] But the Lord's

[1] St. Spiridon was born at Cyprus and, although of humble origin, was unanimously chosen Bishop of Trimiphunt on account of the holiness of his life. He was gifted with the power of working miracles, and was amongst the Bishops who took part in the first Œcumenical Council of Nicea, convoked to refute the heresy of Arius. He died in 348. (*See* "Lives of the Saints.")

power and sovereignty are especially manifested when He converts a sinful man into a holy chosen vessel after he had terribly fallen; when He restores, raises, and renews the depraved; when He gives life to the man who was dead in soul and body, and leads into eternal life him who had fallen into eternal death This is indeed the miracle of miracles; this reveals the infinite mercy, wisdom, and omnipotence of the Lord in relation to His creatures; or, above all, that He Himself, the Lord of all creatures, the infinite, the uncontainable, was pleased and was able to become man for our salvation, and that "the Word, by whom all things were made, was made flesh, and dwelt among us,"[1] living with men and being like unto man in everything, except sin. "The heavens were in awe, and the ends of the earth were astonished, that God appeared as man in the flesh."[2] He conversed with men, loaded us with benefits, worked innumerable miracles, suffered (O, wonder!), died (O, awful wonder!), and rose again, raising with Himself us also, who were dead in Adam! I glorify Thy most merciful, holy, almighty, and most wise power, Lord! Show upon me, also, Lord, Thy wonderful power, and, by ways known unto Thee, save me, Thine unworthy servant, disregarding my trespasses, voluntary and involuntary, committed in knowledge or ignorance, guiding me ever in Thy way, and strengthening me upon this way by Thy grace, and through me the others for whom Thou hast placed me as a light, shepherd, teacher, and priest.

"When you partake of the immortal food and drink, the Body and Blood of the Lord, raise your grateful heart to the Lord and say: I thank Thee, Lord, Bread of Life and source of immortality, for giving unto us Thy Body and Blood for our food and drink, so that we, cleansed and sanctified here by them, may enter into Thine eternal kingdom—may eternally delight in the contemplation of Thy countenance and Thy blessed life! Do not suffer me, Lord, to care only for bodily food and drink; do not suffer me, Lord, to become attached to them, but grant that I may cleave to Thee alone. When you partake of perishable sweet things, thank the Lord, saying: I thank Thee, sweetness eternal, incomparable, infinitely surpassing all earthly sweetness, which are carnal and gross. Thou art the sweetness imperishable, life-giving, holy, tranquil, light, most peaceful, most joyful, inexhaustible; I thank Thee also for granting me these perishable sweet things to partake of and enjoy, so that through them I may learn, although only in part, how sweet Thou art, Thou who art all sweetness, and how greatly Thou art to be desired. Enlightened by the material light, say: Glory to Thee, light that never sets, most sweet, and giving joy to everything, for this

[1] Canon of the Eighth Tone, Hymn 9. [2] St. John i. 14.

perishable but beautiful light, for lighting us by this image of Thine inaccessible Divine light, so that from this material light our thoughts may unceasingly pass to Thee, the eternal Light that never sets, and may aspire to attain through purity of life to the most blessed contemplation of Thyself. When you breathe the air with your lungs, that vivifying and refreshing element, constantly necessary for the support of our perishable life, again raise yourself in thought to the life-giving Lord, the Holy Ghost, with the Father and the Son, by whom we live, move, and exist, thanking Him for uninterrupted breath, and know, that as the body cannot live without air, so your soul cannot for an instant lead the true life without the Holy Ghost, and by pure and temperate living strive constantly to be in communion with God Himself, for without Him the soul dies. Thus from every created thing or being raise yourself continually to the Creator; thank Him for everything, and do not cling to any creature, do not serve any creature more than the Creator Himself, for service or slavery to creatures and attachment to earthly things is idolatry.

Bring your heart in sacrifice to God, give it wholly to the Almighty, renounce yourself, and all sinful inclinations: malice, hatred, pride, disobedience, and self-will, envy, malevolence, malignancy, avarice, covetousness, gluttony, fornication, uncleanness, stealing, deceit, fulness, slothfulness, and others; and continually force yourself to be kind when others exasperate and offend you, to pray for your enemies, for meekness, humility, gentleness, truer benevolence, generosity, disinterestedness, abstinence, chastity, alms-giving, truth and righteousness, industry, obedience, and others. It is difficult to conquer the passions, which become as though our natural members ("Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth"[1]), but by being continually watchful over yourself, by constant fervent prayer and abstinence, with the help of God you will be able to conquer and eradicate them. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."[2] I reverence even two or three praying together, for in accordance with the Lord's promise He Himself is in the midst of them. I reverence still more a numerous congregation. Collective prayer is speedily fulfilled, and bears much fruit when it is united, unanimous ("gathered together in My name"). The assiduous prayer of the Church for the Apostle Peter immediately ascended before the throne of the Lord, and the Lord sent his angel to miraculously deliver Peter from the prison, whom Herod wished to destroy. The unanimous prayer of the Apostles Paul and Silas brought down upon them wonderful heavenly help from the Holy Ghost.[3]

[1] Colossians iii. 5. [2] St. Matthew xviii. 20. [3] Acts xii. 5–11; xvi. 24–6.

What darkness, what madness, what infirmity, and what a terrible deadly power is sin! Gazing upon faces because they are beautiful, we inwardly commit adultery; or we hate a man because his character does not agree with ours, because he has different passions to ours, because he has not the same disposition of spirit as ours, which is often not sinless, but passionate and vicious. Is the beauty of a face a reason to commit adultery—to sin? Should it not rather be a reason for praising the Creator, Who hath created man so beautifully? Is the fact of a man's character or temper not agreeing with ours, of his not showing much indulgence to our pride and in general to our passions, of his not having the same disposition of spirit as ours, a reason for us to hate him? Has not everybody his own free-will, his own character, temperament, habits, passions, and ways? Ought we not to be indulgent to everyone, to respect everyone's personal freedom, which even the Lord Himself does not violate?

It is unpleasant for a proud man when it is required of him to be humble to others; for an envious man when it is required of him to wish his enemies well; for a vindictive one when forgiveness and reconciliation are required of him; for one who loves money to be reminded of paying his debts; for a glutton when he is reminded of fasting and of the salvation of his soul. But they should conquer their feelings, their passions, and joyfully fulfil that which is required of them, or which is required by the Gospel; otherwise, by giving themselves up unrepentingly, irremediably to their passions, they will be eternally lost.

Glory to the power of Thy grace, Lord! Nothing, no effort of sin, can resist it in those who call upon it with faith. Thus, when subjected to the violence of the enemy of everything good—the Devil—and tempted by passions, I made the sign of the cross upon myself, saying inwardly, "Nothing can resist the power of Thy grace," and the violence ceased, the trouble and oppression passed away, and were replaced by tranquillity and peace. Glory to Thy power, Lord!

"I am only the witness that I may bear witness before Him of all thou tellest me."[1] The priests will be witnesses before the Saviour on the terrible day of judgment concerning sinners, whether they repented or did not repent of these or those sins, and they who were penitent will be forgiven. But why is it necessary for God to have witnesses when He *Himself* knows everything? As has been said: "He needed not that any

[1] From the Office of Confession, the words of the confessor to his spiritual child.

should testify of man, for He knew what was in man."[1] For God they are not necessary, but they are necessary for us. It will be pleasant for us to see how the priests will bear witness concerning us, before the angels and men, that we repented of our sins, condemned ourselves, expressed our loathing for sin, took the firm resolution not to sin. Remember the Saviour's words to the Apostles: "Ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them;"[2] or, "His Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations."[3]

Grant me, Lord, grace to renounce myself, this devil that I have become by inheritance from Adam. Lord Jesus, the New Adam, change me; make a new man of me; let me be clothed in Thee.

"Every valley" and dale "shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight . . . and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."[4] The valley and dale are humble hearts. The mountain and hill shall be brought low—that is, proud men who think highly of themselves, and despise the lowly and humble. So it is: the Lord unceasingly acts through the spirit of righteousness and mercy in the hearts of men, humbling the proud by various worldly circumstances—by maladies, losses, humiliations from other people, and exalting the humble.

Flatterers are our greatest enemies. They blind our eyes, do not let us see our many defects, and thus hinder us upon the way to perfection, especially if we ourselves are self-loving and not far-seeing. This is why we must always stop those who flatter us, or avoid them. Woe unto him who is surrounded by flatterers! Happy is he who is surrounded by simple-hearted people who do not hide the truth, although it may be unpleasant! For instance, when they detect his weaknesses, faults, passions, and mistakes.

He that is joined to God unfailingly, and as if naturally, loves his neighbour, because his neighbour is the image of God. And if he is a Christian, then he is also a child of God, a member of Christ, the God-man, and his own member besides. "For we are members one of another."[5] We are members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones."[6] But he who loves God is indifferent to everything earthly—to food, drink, dainties, to earthly beauty, dress, fame. For he cannot serve

[1] St. John ii. 25. [2] St. Mark xiii. 9. [3] St. Matthew xxiv. 14.
[4] St. Luke iii. 5, 6. [5] Ephesians iv. 25. [6] Ephesians v. 30.

two masters, for his heart is joined to the Lord; he is absorbed by Him, by his love for Him, and in the Lord everything earthly seems to vanish for him. Every worldly charm, even his own old sinful, passionate heart vanishes, and becomes united to God in one spirit. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit,"[1] because he becomes enlightened in God, and sees the true value of all things earthly and heavenly, sees especially the vanity, the uselessness of everything earthly; the truth, the immeasurable superiority, and the eternity of spiritual blessings. He finds in God the cleansing from sins, and the holiness, peace, lightness, true freedom, and joy in the Holy Ghost which are natural to our spirit, but which we have lost. He also finds in God his natural spiritual food and drink, spiritual sweetness, spiritual raiment, shining, adorned, and white as snow, and unspeakable beauty, which will eternally enrapture him, inaccessible light which shall eternally light him, and an abode corresponding to his soul in like manner as he himself will be the abode of the Holy Trinity.

Lord! let my heart cling to Thee alone, and do not let it cling to anything earthly; for in earthly attachments there is sorrow, oppression, and torment. Let nothing earthly be dear to my heart, but grant that I may value Thee, the one Lord, above all, as well as everything heavenly, and the soul created after Thine image, immortal, reasonable, speaking, free, the breath of Thy mouth. Let nothing earthly—money, food, dress, rank, signs of distinction, etc.—become the idol of my heart. We must accustom ourselves to the simplest, least dainty of food, in order that the heart should not be allured by it, and even that in moderation, only for imparting strength.

The Lord was crucified for us on the cross. This is the reason why it, as well as the sign of the cross, has such power. This is why it is life-giving. This is why even in the Old Testament its symbol had such great power. The pole upon which the serpent was set cured those who were bitten by serpents; the cross, traced by Moses's rod, separated the waters; Moses's hands uplifted in prayer, and forming the cross, conquered Amalek, and so on.

As quickly as the pleasure of eating and drinking passes away in those sitting at table dining, for instance, so quickly shall pass, and passes away the present life, with all its pleasures, joys, sorrows, and sickness. It is like morning dew,

[1] 1 Corinthians vi. 17.

vanishing at the appearance of the sun. Therefore the Christian, who is called to a heavenly country, who is only a stranger and a sojourner upon earth, ought not attach his heart to anything earthly, but should cling to God alone, the Source of life, our resurrrection, and the Life eternal.

We must not look with wonderment and malice upon the various sins, weaknesses and passions of humanity, because they form the old enticement, the infirmity of all mankind, and men themselves, by their own strength, cannot anyhow free themselves from them, and therefore a Saviour of men was necessary, not an intercessor, not an angel, but the Lord Himself incarnate. May He save me wholly! This is why we should despise human passions, even when directed against us; for instance: envy, malice, pride, avarice, extortion—and must not be exasperated with those who are subjected to them, but must behave gently to them, and act upon them by words, persuasion, and secret prayer, as did the Lord and His Saints in relation to their enemies. This is what the worldly wisdom of a Christian consists in.

Strive by every means constantly to rejoice the Heavenly Father by your life; that is, by your meekness, humility, gentleness, obedience, abstinence, right judgment, love of peace, patience, mercy, sincere friendship with worthy people, kindness to everybody, cordial hospitality, universal benevolence, accuracy in business, simplicity of heart and character, and by the purity of all your thoughts. Teach and strengthen us, O God, to live in accordance with Thy Will, for Thou art our Father, and we are Thy children, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Everyone must bear in mind that every man possesses, besides his animal nature, a spiritual nature also; that as the animal nature has its requirements, the spiritual one has its own requirements too. The requirements of the animal nature are: drink, food, sleep, breath, light, clothing, warmth; whilst those of the spiritual nature are meditation, feeling, speaking, communion with God through prayer, Divine service, the sacraments, instruction in the Word of God, and fellowship with our neighbour through mutual conversation, charitable help, mutual instruction and teaching. We must also bear in mind that our animal nature is temporal, transitory, perishable, whilst the spiritual one is eternal, not transitory and indestructible; that we must despise the flesh as perishable, and care for the soul, which is immortal, for its salvation, its enlightenment, its cleansing from sins, passions, and vices for its adornment with such virtues as meekness, humility, gentleness, courage, patience,

submission, and obedience to God and men, purity and abstinence. Grant wisdom, O Lord, to every man that he may ever bear this in mind!

O Lord! let not Thy gifts, both spiritual and material, lie idle in us and for us; grant that they may be exercised salutarily and usefully. Fulfil this in all. May the number of Thy talents be increased by the personal activity of each one of us.

Look upon a spiteful, proud, presumptuous man as you would upon the wind, and do not be offended at his malice, pride, and presumption, but be calm in yourself. The enemy purposely irritates you, kindling the fire of the human passions, or arousing in your heart various suspicions of an evil nature and imaginary fancies.

Do not pay attention to the words of an arrogant man, but rather to their power. It often happens that words that appear harsh at first sight, do not proceed from any harshness of the heart, but only from habit. How would it be if everyone paid strict critical attention to our words, without Christian love, indulgent, sheltering, kindly, and patient? We must have died long ago.

Ought a holy and chosen flock, that is, orthodox Christians, to live, as we live? Are we walking by faith, are we living soberly in expectation of the second coming of Christ and of the terrible day of judgment? Do we tremble at the thought of everlasting torments? Do we thirst for eternal bliss? Do we not cling to this transitory life. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation!"[1] Keep a strict watch over yourselves. Much will be required of you. Is this how those should live, who hope for the resurrection and the future life? Is this how those should live, who have received warning and sure testimony—from the true and veritable Head of their faith—of the truth and certitude of future torments?

How insignificant is the earth and earthly life in comparison with heaven, with Christ's eternal kingdom! And yet we attach ourselves so much to the earthly things, and are so careless of the salvation of the soul, of eternal life!

Luxuries, money are worse than ordinary dust and dirt, because they sully the soul; ordinary dust only sullies the

[1] 1 Peter ii. 9.

body, clothing, or room. O, how necessary it is to despise luxuries, money, and dress besides!

Our life is incomplex: because our life is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the most incomplex eternal Being, having no beginning. "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."[1] Why, then, do we seek life in men, in enjoyments, in money, in honours, in dress, etc.? There is no life for the heart in these things, but only affliction, straitness, and spiritual death. Why do we forsake the Fountain of living waters—the Lord, and hew out "cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water"?[2] Why do we toss about, and trouble about trifles? Why are we so greedy after enjoyments, money, honours, dress, and various other things? All these are dead, perishable, transitory. The Devil, who has the power of death, is also imcomplex, and catches us in his snares, wounding us unto death; this is why we must be on our guard, and not attach ourselves to anything, so that we may not be hurt by him.

Avoid such a mode of life as tends to living for carnal motives and desires only; that is, only to sleeping, eating, dressing, walking, then again, to eating, drinking, and walking. Such a mode of life at last completely kills a man's spiritual life, making him quite earthly, and a creature of the earth; whilst the Christian, even during his life on earth, ought to be heavenly. "For the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[3] "Our Father, which art in heaven!" We ought to read the Word of God more frequently, pray more often at home and in church, and in every place, of course more inwardly than outwardly; to meditate more often on God, the creation, the calling and predestination of man; on God's providence, the redemption, God's unspeakable love to mankind, the lives and glorious deeds of the Saints, who pleased God by their manifold virtues, and on other subjects; also to fast, to examine our conscience, to repent sincerely and deeply of our sins, and so on!

God's Wisdom, Mercy, and Omnipotence may be observed above all in the fact that the Lord places each one of us in such a position, that if we wish we can bring to God the fruits of good works, and save ourselves and others, and that out of the greatest sinners He makes righteous men, obeying His grace, which leads to salvation, and wonderfully saves us from all misfortunes, rescuing us even from destruction itself.

You wish others to speedily correct themselves of their

[1] 1 John v. 11. [2] Jeremiah ii. 13. [3] St. Matthew ii. 2.

faults, but do you speedily correct yourself; do you not suffer from the same, as others? Is it not through you, through your not correcting yourself, that others linger in their sins and passions?

Do everything in opposition to that which the enemy suggests to you: he suggests to you to hate those who offend you—you must love them; bless those who curse you, and do not torment those who take away your property, but give it away willingly; when you want to laugh—weep; when you feel despondent—endeavour to be glad; when you feel envious—rejoice at the prosperity of others; when you are inclined to contradiction and disobedience—immediately submit and agree; when impure thoughts occur to you—be zealous of the purity of your heart, represent to yourself the high destiny of the Christian, made godly in Christ Jesus, and remember that our members are—the members of Christ; when you feel proud—humble yourself; when spiteful—be specially kind; when irritable—preserve calmness; when avaricious—be generous; when distracted—immediately close your feelings to all outward things, and meditate on the "one thing needful"; when you feel doubt, little faith, unbelief—then especially call firm faith to your help, remind yourself of the examples of faith, or of believers in the Old and New Testaments, as well as the miracles accomplished by faith, and so on. Do thus, and do not succumb to the enemy: for all passions, partialities, and fancies are of his imagination.

You will spend the festival well, to the glory of God and the salvation of your soul, if you refrain from such passions as: malice, pride, cupidity, envy, avarice, intemperance, slothfulness, inattention, carelessness in pleasing God, and neglect of your soul; and if you practise the virtues opposite to these sins, and other good works. You will be devoting the festival not to God, but to Satan, if you are allured on such a day by your passions and vices. You will spend Sunday well (the day of Resurrection), if with your soul you will rise from the dead to God, forsaking unrighteous acts, if you are regenerate and renewed by grace. But you will spend the day ill, fruitlessly, if you do not rid your heart of your malice, cupidity, or your attachment to earthly things, and if your soul is not inflamed by heavenly love, by the love of God, by the love of the heavenly country, and of the life that never grows old, which is prefigured by Sunday, the day of Resurrection—the day of the Sun of righteousness.

Beggars every day pursue you: this means that—God's mercy

continually pursues you. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."[1] And who will flee from God's mercy?

God's Saints value more than any of us the great act of the redemption of mankind by God, the descent of the Son of God from heaven, His teaching, likewise His sufferings, death, burial, resurrection, and Ascension into heaven; for they spent all their lives in working out their own and others' salvation, sincerely, firmly, infallibly, with their whole hearts; for the sake of their own and others' salvation, they renounced themselves, fasted, prayed, watched, wrestled, laboured in deed and word with their intellect and pen. But we do not understand how to value such great acts; we are cold, distracted, heedless, and are more occupied with the visible world and of its goods, which are but smoke.

I commit my whole life and everything, by which a man lives, my spiritual and bodily requirements, unto Christ my God, the Provider, the Ruler, and the Saviour: for, everything is in His hands. As for me, I have only to zealously fulfil His commandments.

Do not suffer, Lord, that even for an instant I may do the will of Thine and mine enemy—the Devil, but grant that I may continually do Thy Will, alone the Will of my God and my King: Thou alone, my true King by Whom all kings reign, grant that I may ever obey Thee, reverence Thee truly and firmly. "O come let us worship, and fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker; serve the Lord in fear and rejoice unto Him with reverence."[2]

How must we look upon the gifts of intellect, feeling and freedom? With the intellect we must learn to know God in the works of His creation, revelation, providence, and in the destinies of men; with the heart we must feel God's love, His most heavenly peace, the sweetness of His love, we must love our neighbour, sympathise with him in joy and in sorrow, in health and in sickness, in poverty and in wealth, in distinction and in low estate (humiliation); we must use freedom, as a means, as an instrument for doing as much good as possible, and for perfecting ourselves in every virtue, so as to render unto God fruits a hundredfold.

All the Saints in heaven and all true Christians upon earth are "one body and one spirit,"[3] this is why the prayer of believers is heard so easily and speedily and truly in heaven,

[1] St. Matthew v. 7. [2] Psalm xcv. 6; ii. 11. [3] Ephesians iv. 4.

and why there is so much hopefulness in calling upon the Saints; but in order that our prayers should be always easily and speedily heard by the Saints, we must have the same spirit as them, the spirit of faith and of love for God and our neighbour, the spirit of meekness, humility, abstinence, purity and chastity, brave, valiant, thirsting after righteousness, the spirit of compassion, heavenly and not earthly.

Consider yourself worse and more infirm than all others in spiritual respects, and despise, hate yourself for your sins, —this is pious and right—and be indulgent to others, respect and love them in spite of their sins, for God's sake, Who commanded us to respect and love all men, and also because they are created after His image—although they bear the wounds of sin, and because they are members of Jesus Christ.

The Lord sometimes suddenly sends bountiful material gifts, such, for instance, as: money in payment for some very easy work, and thus rewards you for the expenditure you have incurred in affording help to your neighbour; in general He freely bestows upon us the bountiful gifts of His mercy, in order that we should not grudge His gifts to those whom He sends to us, or whom He allows to take our property, which He has given us in order that we should not be at enmity amongst ourselves, but should live in love and harmony; should our neighbour rob us of our property, even then we ought not to be disquieted, but should bear it meekly, trusting to God to punish for the offence. You know, that the Lord Himself meekly allowed even His garments to be taken from Him, and His body to be tortured upon the cross—for your sake, to teach you meekness and gentleness in all misfortunes and offences.

God is good and all-goodness, and you, His image, must also be good. He is bountiful to all, and you too must be generous, and avoid avarice and grudging your neighbour anything material, perishable, as the greatest calamity and foolishness.

"Who or what are our idols?" They are—some persons, and after these our transitory life; our mortal body full of passions and the things relating to it: food and drink, dress, ornaments, distinctions, money, house furniture, etc. When the tempter attacks you through attachments to visible things by trust in visible things, bread, money and so on, then steadfastly lift up the eyes of your heart towards the invisible and eternal: first to the invisible and eternal God—the Source of our life; secondly

towards the invisible life that has no ending, towards the eternal bliss of the righteous after this transitory life. When he inspires you to seek life in corruptible things, you must strive after life in the incorruptible; when he attracts your eyes to the human body, disregarding its immortal soul, you must turn your mental gaze still more steadfastly upon the soul of the man, created after God's image and likeness, redeemed by the suffering and death of the Son of God upon the cross, made to inherit eternal blessings, affiliated by God, the temple of the Holy-Ghost, and the Bride of the Holy-Ghost. Avoid duplicity, that is, do not let your heart be divided between attachment to God and attachment to earthly things, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon";[1] cling to God alone, put your trust in Him alone; for the Devil, by inciting us to duplicity, seeks himself to gain possession of our heart, which is single and indivisible. And remember, that to attach yourself to God is always good, blessed, whilst to attach yourself to the world and its blessings is evil, painful, sorrowful, oppressive: for "attachment" to the world is a delusion of the Devil, and is his spirit.

The end of everything on earth—of my body, of enjoyments, of dress, of all treasures is—destruction, corruption and disappearance, but the spirit lives for ever. May my soul remember this, and not grieve at the loss of anything temporal, perishable, but be zealous about eternal, imperishable matters: concerning God, concerning the fulfilment of His commandments, the unity of love, a peaceful condition, patience, temperance, chastity, self-denial, the heart's indifference to all earthly beauties and enjoyments, not greedy of gain (only striving to gain the Lord Himself), seeking the one thing needful; endeavouring not to imitate the crafty, and not to envy those that work iniquity. Let others take away your dross—do not mind this and do not be exasperated at it.

The Lord has made us His Own (O, highest honour and dignity!) whilst through our sins, we alienate ourselves from our Master, Who has given us birth by water and the Spirit. The Lord has most truly joined Himself to us by His Flesh and Blood,[2] which are united with His soul and Divinity—whilst we, through our sins and vices, join ourselves in the closest manner to God's enemy and our own.

When praying with people, we sometimes have to pierce through with our prayer as if it were the hardest wall—human souls, hardened and petrified by earthly passions—to penetrate the Egyptian darkness, the darkness of passions and worldly

[1] St. Matthew vi. 24. [2] Hebrews ii. 14.

attachments. This is why it is sometimes difficult to pray. The simpler the people one prays with the easier it is.

If God had not been incarnate upon earth, if He had not made us godly, if He had not taught us in His Own person how to live, what to hope for and expect, if He had not pointed out to us another perfect and eternal life, if He had not suffered and died and risen from the dead—then we should still have had some reason to live, as we all now live—that is to mostly lead a carnal, earthly life. But, now, we ought to meditate upon higher things, and count all earthly things but dung,[1] for, everything earthly is nothing, in comparison with heavenly things. Meanwhile, the Devil, the father of lies, in spite of the Saviour's teaching and His spirit, teaches us to attach ourselves to earthly goods, and forcibly nails our sensual heart to them. The heart naturally seeks happiness—and the Devil gives a false direction to this tendency, and allures it by earthly happiness, that is—by riches, honours, splendour of dress, furniture, silver, equipages, gardens and various amusements.

Give yourself up entirely to God's providence, to the Lord's Will, and do not grieve at losing anything material, nor in general at the loss of visible things; do not rejoice at gain, but let your only and constant joy be to win the Lord Himself. Trust entirely in Him: He knows how to lead you safely through this present life, and to bring you to Himself—into His eternal Kingdom. From want of trust in God's providence many and great afflictions proceed: despondency, murmurings, envy, avarice, love of money or the passion for amassing money and property in general, so that it may last for many years, in order to eat, drink, sleep and enjoy; from want of trust in God's providence proceed in particular afflictions such as arise, for instance: from some loss of income through our own oversight, from the loss of objects, specially valuable and necessary, as well as immoderate joy at recovering some objects, or at receiving some large income or gain, or some profitable place or employment. We, as Christians, as "fellow citizens with the Saints and of the household of God,"[2] ought to commit all our life, together with all its sorrows, sicknesses, griefs, joys, scarcities and abundance unto Christ our God.

"He hath shewed strength with His arm: He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath shewed strength with His arm" means that the Lord, through His incarnation, reigned over the enemies of our salvation, and, having conquered them by His power, and

[1] Philippians iii. 8. [2] Ephesians ii. 19.

made His Mother Sovereign Queen of heaven and earth, "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts," that is, the Devil and the powers assisting him, the spirits of evil, He conquered them on the cross, scattering their hordes. "He hath put down the mighty from their seats," that is, the fallen angel, Satan, who reigned over mankind: and "exalted them of low degree," that is, the Mother of God, and all humble Christians. "He hath filled the hungry with good things," for instance: that same Most-pure, gracious Lady and other Saints—and "the rich He hath sent empty away,"[1] that is: the demons who would have richly filled the abysses of hell with prisoners—the human souls, which were brought to the light of Christ's Kingdom by the Saviour, when He descended into hell.

We only call the Lord, God, but in reality we have our own gods, because we do not do the Will of God, but the will and thoughts of our flesh, the will of our heart, of our passions; our gods are—our flesh, pleasures, money, dress, etc.

What vanities, what foolish fancies often occupy most of us, even in sight of the highest, the most important objects of faith, in sight of the greatest holiness. For instance, when a man stands before the icons of the Lord, of the Mother of God, of an Angel, of an Archangel, of one or a whole assembly of Saints, at home or in the temple, and, sometimes, instead of prayer, instead of laying aside, at this time, in this place, all worldly cares, he casts up his accounts and reckonings, goes over his expenses and receipts, rejoices at the gain, and grieves at the loss of profits, or the failure of some undertaking (without, of course, a single thought of spiritual profit or loss), or else he thinks evil of his neighbour, exaggerating his weakness, his passions, suspecting him, envying him, judging him, or if it is in church, he looks at the faces of those, standing near him, also how they are dressed, who is nice looking, and who not, or making plans what he shall do, in what pleasure or vanity he will spend the day, and so on. And this often happens at the time when the greatest, the most heavenly Sacrament of the Eucharist, that is, of the most-pure Body and Blood of our Lord, is being celebrated; when we ought to be wholly in God, wholly occupied in meditations on the mystery accomplished for our sakes, of the redemption from sin, from the eternal curse and death; and on the mystery of our being made godly in the Lord Jesus Christ. How low we have fallen, how earthly-minded we have become, and from what does it

[1] St. Luke i. 51-54.

all proceed? From inattention, and the neglect of our salvation, from attachment to temporal things, from weakness of faith, or unbelief in eternity.

How is it that all nature, and everything in nature, is so wisely arranged, and moves in such wonderful order? It is because the Creator Himself directs and governs it. How is it that in the nature of man—the crown of creation—there is so much disorder? Why are there so many irregularities and deformities in his life? Because he took upon himself to direct and govern himself, against the Will and Wisdom of his Creator. Sinful man! give yourself up wholly, all your life unto the Lord your God, and all your life will move in wise, beautiful, stately, and life-giving order, and will all become beautiful as the lives of God's Saints, who gave themselves up entirely to Christ their God, and whom the Church daily offers to us, as an example to imitate.

Value highly, and always preserve Christian meekness and kindness, mutual peace and love, crushing by every possible means the impulses of self-love, malice, irritability, and disturbance. Do not be disturbed and angered, when anybody tells you a falsehood to your face, or claims any unjust pretension, or speaks offensively, or boldly detects any of your weaknesses or passions, the wrongfulness of which, through your self-love, you did not suspect. Always first coolly reflect over what your opponent says to you, as well as over your own words and conduct, and, if, upon an entirely impartial consideration of your words and actions, you find them just, then let your conscience be at rest, and do not heed the words of your adversary, either remaining silent before him, or showing him his error quietly, gently, in all kindness of heart; but should you find yourself guilty of that, which your adversary detects in you, then, putting aside self-love and pride, ask pardon for your fault, and endeavour to correct yourself in future. We are often angry with straightforward, frank people for openly disclosing our iniquities. We ought to value such people, and forgive them, if by their bold speaking they break down our self-love. They are, in a moral sense, the surgeons who cut off, with a sharp word, the rottenness of the heart, and through arousing our self-love, they awaken, in the soul deadened by sin, a consciousness of sin and a vital reaction.

"The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."[1] If we do daily strive to conquer

[1] St. Matthew xi. 12.

the passions, which fight against us, and to gain the Kingdom of God in our heart, then the passions will tyrannically, forcibly take possession of us, will invade our soul like robbers; our attachments to earthly things will increase in proportion as our faith in heavenly blessings and love for them grows weaker and weaker; our love for God and our neighbour—will also grow weaker and weaker; we shall enjoy rest of conscience and peace of heart more and more seldom. We must struggle in the matter of the salvation of the soul, which is more precious than anything in the world; we must count everything earthly as dross, or as a phantom, a vision, and everything heavenly, above all, the Lord Himself—as truth itself, eternal, most-blessed, and unchangeable.

We all love life, are anxious, and strive for a happy life, and yet our life is corrupted by passions. Wherefore? Because we do not seek life where we should.

To the young, and to all grown up people. Remember, that the moral law of God continually acts in the world, in accordance with which, every good is inwardly rewarded, whilst every evil is punished. Evil is accompanied by affliction and straitness of heart, and good—by peace, joy, and expansion of the heart. This law is unchangeable: for it is the law of the unchangeable, all-holy, righteous, most-wise, and eternal God. Those who do good, or who fulfil this moral or Gospel law (which is also a moral law, only the most perfect) shall be infallibly rewarded by eternal life, while its transgressors, and those who have not repented of its transgression shall be punished by eternal torment.

God is that Which Is (Existing). In Him, all the Saints, all reasonable and free beings are—one. "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us."[1] I, myself, am—nothing: God is everything in me, God is in all, and God is everything to all—"Our Father, Which art in heaven!"

When you call in prayer upon the Lord God in Three Persons, remember that you are calling upon the unoriginate Father of all creatures, angels, and men; that all the heavenly Powers are in wonderment at you as you call upon Him, and look lovingly upon you that you are able to call with faith, love, and becoming reverence upon our and their common Father, the Almighty, Creator and Lord, Whom they love boundlessly, Whom they reverence deeply. O, what

[1] St. John xvii. 21.

great happiness and blessedness, what an honour, how sublime a thing it is to be able to call upon the eternal Father! Value continually and unchangeably this highest happiness, this blessedness which the infinite mercy of God has reserved to you, and do not forget it during the time of your prayer. God hears you, God's saints and angels hear you. (February 26th, 1864.) I shed tears while writing these lines.

"Christ is all and in all"[1] (in the holy angels, in holy men, and in Christians living, or endeavouring to live holily upon earth), "and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body."[2] Thus, the Church —God's saints, the Mother of God, the angels, the prelates, the martyrs, the holy fathers, the righteous, and all holy persons—are the Saviour's body, and He Himself is—their Head. Our Lady, the Mother of God, is—the Sovereign of mental edification—that is, Our Lady and all the Saints are —one spirit with the Lord: so pure and holy are they, and they have the same relation to Him, or the same union with Him, as the members of a body to the head, and there is one spirit in them, the Spirit of God; as the soul is in one body, so is the one God and Father in them. And we—as the members of the earthly Church are also—one body.

Our Lady, the Mother of God, is the most beautifully adorned temple of the Holy Trinity. She is, after God, the treasury of all blessings, of purity, holiness, of all true wisdom, the source of spiritual power and constancy.

We are—one body of love. Food, drink, money, dress, houses, all earthly attributes are—*nothing*, whilst man is—everything; nothing is so precious as man. Man, by his soul, is immortal, whilst everything material is perishable and ephemeral; everything material is like dust. Everything is God's, nothing is ours. Man! esteem the dignity of man, as the image of God and in the time of his need, do not grudge him any material help.

Everything, except true love, is an illusion. If a friend behaves coldly, rudely, spitefully, insolently to you, say—this is an illusion of the enemy, if a feeling of enmity, arising from your friend's coldness and insolence, disturbs you, say:—this is an illusion of mine; but the truth is, that I love my friend, in spite of everything, and I do not wish to see evil in him, which is an illusion of the demon, and which is in me also; I will be indulgent to his faults, for they are in me also; we have—the same sinful nature. You say that your friend has sins and great

[1] Colossians iii. 11. [2] Ephesians i. 22, 23.

defects? So have you.—You say, that you do not love him because of such and such sins and defects. Then do not love yourself either, because you have the same sins and defects as he has. But remember, that the Lamb of God took upon Himself the sins of the whole world. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant" for his sins, defects, and vices? Everyone "to his own master standeth or falleth."[1] But, in accordance with Christian love, you must be indulgent in every possible way to the faults of your neighbour, you must cure him of his wickedness, of his spiritual infirmity (for every coldness, every passion is an infirmity) by love, kindness, meekness, humility, as you yourself would wish to receive from others, when you suffer from a similar infirmity. For who is not subject to infirmity? Whom does the most evil enemy spare? Lord! destroy all the snares of the enemy in us.

Remember what man is. He is the image of God, a child of God, a Christian, an inheritor of the Kingdom, a member of Christ. We must therefore esteem every man, although he may bear in his soul the wounds of sins. The wounds—are wounds; they are made by the Devil and sin, but still the image is the image of God. We must pity him for his wounds, grieve, pray for him as for ourselves: for we are all—one body. "And hath made of one blood all nations."[2] "We are all partakers of that one bread."[3] Do not pay attention to diabolical disturbances, separations, and animosities. Repeat: everything is—*one*. Say: we are—one.

Count all worldly delights as—dross and corruption; do not love anything earthly, do not grudge anything earthly to any man, and do not nourish any animosity against him through such things. Love aspires to rejoice the beloved and is sparing of nothing.

Lord, grant that I may see my transgressions, that I may not despise sinners, like unto myself, and may not nourish any ill-feeling in my heart against them for their sins, that I may despise myself as I deserve, as the greatest of sinners, and that I may ever feel an implacable hatred of myself—of mine own carnal man: "If any man . . . . . hate not . . . . . his own life, he cannot be My disciple,"[4] says the Lord.

God is the Creator and Ruler of the whole world and everything in it is—His work, the fruit of His power and Wisdom.

[1] Romans xiv. 4.
[2] Acts xvii. 26.
[3] 1 Corinthians x. 17.
[4] St. Luke xiv. 26.

There is no need to ask anyone whether we ought to spread or propagate the Glory of God, either by writing, or by word, or by good works. This we are obliged to do according to our power and possibility. We must make use of our talents. If you think much about such a simple matter, then, perhaps, the Devil may suggest to you such foolishness as that you need only be inwardly active.

The principal characteristic of this present, temporal life is temptation.

What is sweeter than love? And yet there is not much love in us! Wherefore? We love our flesh exceedingly, and with it everything carnal, material and earthly! Let us, therefore, despise the flesh and walk by the spirit, mortifying the works of the flesh by the spirit.

Avarice occasions a waste of love, and inspires hatred against those who deprive or rob us of our property; whilst hearty generosity arouses love for those, to whom we are liberal; forced generosity, however, also produces dislike. Avarice proceeds from —the Devil, generosity from—God. He is the Father of bounties. Every attachment to material things proceeds from—the Devil; neglect, contempt of material things and indifference to them, for the love of God—from God. Amen.

"My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."[1] Thus the Lord's commandments are easy and light. Whilst the Devil's yoke is evil, and his burden heavy. But what do we see? We transgress the Lord's commandments and fulfil those of the Devil. How accursed are we!

Always remember that your neighbour, whoever he may be, if he is a Christian, is a member of Christ, though he may be a sick one, but then you yourself are also sick, and you must always receive him with respect and love, converse with him heartily, entertain him, and not grudge him anything: neither food, drink, clothes, books, nor money, if he has need of them. The Lord will reward you for him. We are all His children, and He is—everything to us. We are all sinners, and "the wages of sin are"—misfortunes, troubles, sorrow and sickness, and —"death."[2] In order to be saved from sin, we must pray; and in order to pray, we must have faith and hope. Thus for us sinners, prayer, faith and hope, are most necessary. Prayer ought not to cease coming from the mental, and even from the outward lips of a sinner.

[1] St. Matthew xi. 30. [2] Romans vi. 23.

During prayer at home and at church against the craftiness of the Devil, and the distraction of your thoughts, remind yourself of the simplicity of truth, and say to yourself: "simply," I believe in everything that I ask in the simplicity of my heart, and ask for everything simply; whilst all mine enemy's—craftiness, blasphemies, abomination, and illusions—I renounce. Let the origin, and the foundation, and the source of all your thoughts, words, and works be humility, the consciousness of your own nothingness, and the fulness of the Godhead Which hath created and filleth everything, and "worketh all in all."[1] He who is infected by pride is inclined to show contempt for everything, even for holy and Divine objects: pride mentally destroys or defiles every good thought, word, act, every creation of God. It is the deadly breathing of Satan.

What hinders you from fulfilling Christ's commandments The flesh and the world: that is, pleasant food and drink, which men like, in which they delight both in thought and in fact, which make the heart gross and hard—a partiality for elegant dress and adornment, or for distinctions and rewards; if the dress or adornments are made of very beautiful coloured and delicate materials, then care and anxiety arise how to avoid staining or soiling them, or getting them dusty or wet, whilst care and anxiety how to please God in thought, word, and deed vanish and the heart lives for dress and adornment, and becomes entirely engrossed in these things, ceasing to care about God and being united to Him; if such is the case with a priest, then he neglects praying for his people, and becomes not soul-loving, but money-loving and ambitious, seeking not the men themselves, but that which appertains to them, that is, money, food, drink, their favour, their good opinion and good word, and flattering them. Therefore fight against every worldly enticement, against every material enticement that hinders you from fulfilling Christ's commandments, love God with all your heart, and care with all your strength for the salvation of your own soul, and the souls of others, be soul-loving. Remember, that the world, which rose from nothing, is indeed nothingness, and will return to nothing, for heaven and earth shall pass away, but the human soul, the breath of God, the image of the immortal King is itself immortal. Remember all this, and renounce attachments to all earthly things. Besides looking upon corruptible creatures and created things, turn your eyes constantly to the Creator, Who is in every creature, and Who constantly looks upon you, constantly proving your heart and your thoughts. Do not cling with your heart to anything, and do not make it the god of your heart; the sole God of our heart

[1] 1 Corinthians xii. 6.

must be the Lord-God, Who created it: for our heart is His breath. Do not cleave with your whole heart unto any person, that is to any flesh, for the sole God of our heart must be the Lord-God, and to Him only must we cleave. For attachment to material things, or to flesh, is a lie, an enticement of Satan and the will of the Devil. Amen.

By attaching ourselves to mere nothingness, to transitory things, what do we lose?—of what blessings do we deprive ourselves and are deprived? The Lord has told thee, my soul, that the whole visible world in comparison to thee is nothing. Therefore, count it as nothing, and see for what purpose the Creator has created thee and what He wishes to make thee. Remember how the Son of God came down upon earth; how He walked upon earth, announcing the good tidings of heavenly truth; His voluntary poverty; His miracles and prophecies; His last supper; His shame; His sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven; and aim and aspire to heavenly bliss.

True love willingly bears privations, troubles, and labours; endures offences, humiliations, defects, sins, and injustices, if they do not harm others; bears patiently and meekly with the baseness and malice of others, leaving judgment to the all-seeing God, the righteous Judge, and praying that He may teach those who are darkened by senseless passions.

During prayer, and when reading God's Word, we must reverence every thought, every word, as the Spirit of God Himself, the Spirit of Truth. We must extirpate doubt and contempt for the Word as a poison of the spirit of falsehood; and as doubt and contempt are the fruits of self-conceit and pride, we must eradicate pride, and be like infants, lisping in their simplicity before God—like infants, who know and say only that which their parents have taught them, and who do not hear or know any suggestions different to those of their parents, and do not even wish to listen to or know them. For the Holy Ghost taught the Holy Fathers, like simple-hearted and gentle children, how to pray; to thank and praise God by means of those prayers which the Church puts into our mouths. Remember that all of us are the children of the Heavenly Father, and in the simplicity of your soul look upon all as upon the children of the Eternal Father, holy, most good, omnipresent, omniscient, Almighty, most wise, righteous, unchangeable, providing for all and protecting all under the wings of His goodness; and live in love with all, conquering every evil in men by good.

What a high dignity, honour, and happiness it is to pray for men, for this precious possession and inheritance of God! With what gladness, boldness, zeal, and love we must pray to God, the Father of mankind, for His people, redeemed unto Him by the blood of His Son! "These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb."[1] Hear, O priests of God! To you it often happens to converse with God by means of a set form of prayer. Do not let your tongue speak falsely, your lips saying one thing and having another in your heart, or saying and not feeling what you say. If you are praying for anyone, do not let there be any diabolical craftiness and duplicity in you, but pray to the Almighty God, "Who trieth the very hearts and reins,"[2] with your heart as well as your lips. And in order that you may always pray sincerely to the Lord God, despise everything earthly; be without partiality for all the goods and delights of this seductive, corrupt, and fleeting world—food, drink, pleasures, money, dress, and various ornaments and distinctions, the comfort of your temporary abode—consider all this as dross, corruption, and water; be temperate; love God with all your heart, undividedly—not only superficially or anyhow—love him with all your mind and all your strength, and not slightly, so that nothing could tear you away from the love of God: neither sorrow, nor oppression, nor persecutions and misfortunes, nor death, nor life, nor anything else; and love your neighbour as your own self, magnanimously bearing with his faults, infirmities, errors, the outbreak of his passions. Remember it is a great matter to converse with God, Who continually sees us, continually hears us, trying our hearts and reins. Do not let your heart lie; do not let it be cold towards God and your neighbour during the time of prayer for your neighbour. Remember God shall judge you for everything, for every idle or insincere word. And meanwhile the enemy from time immemorial, the father of lies, the Devil, does not slumber, and endeavours to harden by every means your passionate heart and to make it insensible, false, and crafty; endeavours to drive away from your heart faith and hope in God, together with love for Him and love and sympathy for your neighbour, and to occupy you solely with worldly, temporal interests. Watch, watch yourself, the thoughts of your heart, O priest of God, and do not bind yourself by worldly, carnal desires and pleasures. Let your happiness be the one God and the human soul; be soul-loving, and not money-loving or sensual. Lord, accomplish all this Thyself, for without Thee we can do nothing.[3] So be it! So be it!

The most merciful and bountiful Lord is everything to all

[1] Revelation xiv. 4. [2] Psalm vii. 10. [3] St. John xv. 5.

and to me, a miserable sinner, and I have nothing of mine own (the renunciation of every possession). I ought to reverently thank God for everything—for the currents of air, light, water, for every mouthful of food, for clothes. Everything, even our bodies themselves, are indeed only earth and water. Amen.

We are all one, and must love one another as ourselves. The selfish grudging of anything to another, and the vexation at giving, the impulse to grudge, proceed from the Devil. Every attachment to earthly things is an enticement of the Devil and of our own self-love.

What does the holy Church instil in us by putting in our mouths, both during prayer at home and in church, prayers addressed, not by a single person, but by all? She instils in us constant, mutual love, in order that we should always and in everything, during prayer and during worldly intercourse, love one another as our own selves—in order that we, imitating God in three Persons, constituting the highest Unity, should ourselves be one formed of many. "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us."[1] Common prayer on the part of all teaches us also to share earthly needs with others, so that in life also we may have everything in common and as one—that is, that mutual love should be evident in everything, and that each one should use his capacities for the good of others, not hiding his talent in the ground—that he should not be selfish and idle. If you are wise, give advice to the foolish. If you are educated, teach the ignorant. If you are strong, help the weak; if rich, help the poor.

When you are praying alone, and your spirit is dejected, and you are wearied and oppressed by your loneliness, remember then, as always, that God the Trinity looks upon you with eyes brighter than the sun; also all the angels, your own Guardian Angel, and all the saints of God. Truly they do; for they are all one in God, and where God is, there are they also. Where the sun is, thither also are directed all its rays. Try to understand what this means. Always pray with a fervent heart; and to attain to this, never eat and drink excessively. Remember with Whom you are conversing. Men very often forget with Whom they are conversing during prayer, Who are the witnesses of their prayer. They forget that they are conversing with the Vigilant and the All-seeing God; that all the Heavenly Powers and the saints of God are listening to their converse.

[1] St. John xvii. 21.

If enemies surround you, and you are in spiritual distress, call immediately upon our Most Holy Lady. She is Queen in order that she may reign, by Her sovereign power, over the powers that oppose us, and may mightily succour us, for we are Her inheritance.

We are all one, and there is one Lord for all—for the angels, for the saints, for all material worlds, and for each smallest part of them. "Behold the fowls of the air. . . . Consider the lilies of the field. . . . If God so clothe the grass of the field . . . shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?[1] . . . Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" (mutual love), "and all these things shall be added unto you"[2] (from God). This is the most indispensable truth for you. Follow it! Set your hope in everything upon God. "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."[3] Indeed, how is it possible to live as we live, as though there were no God caring for us? We think to order everything ourselves. We think to provide for ourselves, setting aside the thought of God, Who careth for us all.

Do not merely not care for pleasures and fine things, but do not even care for your own sinful flesh; for by the slightest attachment to all these things you anger God. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."[4] You see, therefore, that you are not to pay attention to visible things—let them be as though they did not exist; but you must pay attention to invisible things; for the former are temporal, and the latter eternal. Besides this, if you seek the invisible, then God will provide the visible for you, as He has done until now.

What greatness it is for a Christian, and above all for a Christian priest, that he becomes one with Christ and God the Saviour through the Holy Sacrament!

When communicating of the Holy Mysteries yourself, O priest, say in your heart: "Come unto me, Life-Giver, to rescue me from the jaws of the serpent of hell, to cleanse me from the impurity of passions, to appease my troubled heart, to give life to my deadened soul, to rejoice my sorrowful and despondent spirit. Come to feed me, starving from sinful

[1] St. Matthew vi. 26, 28.
[2] St. Matthew vi. 30, 33.
[3] 1 Peter v. 7.
[4] 2 Corinthians iv. 18.

hunger; to clothe me, naked of every virtue; to strengthen me, the infirm; to honour me, the dishonoured; to exalt me, the base; to ennoble me, the despised; to enlighten my darkened soul. Thou bestowest every blessing upon me. I thank thee, O Most Merciful One!"

Our heart is like the darkened earth; the Gospel is like the sun, enlightening and giving life to our hearts. May the true sun of Thy righteousness shine in our hearts, O Lord!

When I look more closely upon some of the poor, and talk with them, then I see how meek, lovable, humble, simple-hearted, truly kind, poor in body, but rich in spirit they are. They make me—I who am rough, proud, evil, scornful, irritable, crafty, cold towards God and men, envious and avaricious—ashamed of myself. These are the true friends of God. And the enemy, being aware of their spiritual treasures, awakens in his servants—that is, in proud, rich men—contempt and ill-feeling towards them, and would like to wipe them off the face of the earth, as if they had no right to live and walk upon it. O, friends of my God, my poor brethren! It is you who are the truly rich in spirit, whilst I am the real beggar, accursed and poor! You are worthy of sincere respect from us, who possess the blessings of this world in abundance, but who are poor and needy in virtues: abstinence, meekness, humility, kindness sincerity, fervour, and warmth towards God and our neighbour. Lord! teach me to despise outward things, to turn my mental vision inwardly, and to value inward, and despise outward things. Grant that I may observe this in my relations towards the rich and powerful of this world!

A miser values things, and does not value the man who requires these things; he is sparing of the things and unsparing to the man, though the man is a priceless being. He does not grudge himself anything, but he grudges giving to others; he loves himself, and does not love others. But in general everything is dross and water. The inexhaustible Lord is everything to all. He has subdued the whole world like dust and hay under the feet of man.

"Charity suffereth long"[1]—that is, it does not immediately punish the one who sins, but patiently endures his lapses, teaching and correcting him; whilst the nature of malice is to immediately strike an antagonist, or to make him unhappy, pushing him to extremes. It is amazing how evil

[1] 1 Corinthians xiii. 4.

and impatient we are! If our brother has sinned, we are not sorry that he sins, we do not weep from brotherly love at his wilful insanity, at his passion; but we bear malice against him, we despise him for his sins; whilst meanwhile, perhaps we ourselves are, or were, guilty of the same, and were indulgently forgiven our sins, and, only thanks to the indulgence of our superiors, have at last somehow corrected ourselves of these failings, passions, and vices, and become good for anything. If we happen to be even now guilty of the same sins, only not so gravely as our erring brother, it signifies that we too are answerable for them. How, then, can we be otherwise than indulgent to our erring brethren? Thus, in punishing others for sins and crimes, we must also remember our own weaknesses, our vices and passions, past and present, and punish our subordinates lovingly, pityingly, and patiently, and not angrily, not pitilessly, impatiently, hastily. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."[1] It was not without reason that the Apostle placed long-suffering and mercy as the first signs of our love for our neighbour: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind"[2]: for every man is infirm, weak, rash, easily inclined to every sin, but at the same time he may also easily think better of it, rise up, and repent under favourable conditions; and therefore it is necessary to be patient to his infirmities and sins, as we ourselves would wish others to be indulgent to our infirmities, and, seeing them, be as though they did not see them and did not notice them. But in those cases, however, where the sin acts injuriously upon others, or when it is connected with the omission of the duties of our calling, or when it attains great dimensions, then an immediate strictness is necessary for restraining or putting a stop to it, or for removing the injurious person from the midst of well-intentioned people. "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person."[3]

God did not spare for our sakes even His Only Begotten Son. How, then, after this can we grudge anything to our neighbour: either food, drink, clothing, or money for his various needs? The Lord gives much to some and little to others in order that we may provide for each other. The Lord has so ordered that if we willingly share the bountiful gifts of His mercy with others, then they serve to benefit our souls and bodies, by opening our hearts to the love of our neighbour,

[1] 2 Timothy ii. 25, 26. [2] 1 Corinthians xiii. 4. [3] 1 Corinthians v. 13.

whilst our moderation in using them serves to benefit our body, which does not become satiated and overloaded by them. But if we use these gifts selfishly, avariciously, and greedily, for ourselves only, and grudge them to others, then they become injurious to our soul and body—injurious to the soul, because greediness and avarice close the heart to the love of God and our neighbour, and make us repulsive, self-lovers, increasing all our passions; and injurious to the body, because greediness produces satiety in us, and prematurely impairs our health.

We ought to confess our sins more frequently, in order to strike and scourge the sins by the open avowal of them, and in order to feel a greater loathing for them. Think, man, into what misery audacious sin has cast you, and what has been done for your salvation by our Master, Christ, the Son of God; remember His Incarnation, His voluntary self-extinction, His intercourse with men, His words, His miracles, how He was mocked, reviled, spat upon, scourged, buffeted, and, lastly, remember His most shameful crucifixion upon the cross, His death and burial, and His resurrection from the dead. Think what he bore to save us from everlasting torments, and what he requires from you in return: that you should give yourself up wholly to Him; that you should live, not for yourself, but for him, fulfilling His commandments. Shun, therefore, everything that draws you into sin: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; crucify your flesh, with its passions and lusts; save your soul by patience; love God, and your neighbour as yourself.

What has the Lord of our life done for us insignificant, ungrateful, and evil-natured creatures? He came down from heaven, He assumed our flesh, worked many and various miracles; He suffered, shed all His blood, died, descended into hell, bound Satan, destroyed hell, freed the prisoners bound in hell, and brought them up to heaven. He rose from the dead in order to raise us also with Him. Let us fulfil His last will and testament; let us love one another; let us be diligent in fulfilling His other commandments, and let us cease offending Him by our self-will and resistance. Lord, help us!

We ought to be one spirit with the Lord—the spirit of holiness, the spirit of love, of goodness, meekness, long-suffering, mercy. He that has not this spirit in him is not of God. Thus I ought to be love, solely love, counting all as

one "That they all may be one."[1] May it be so! Lord, help me!

How will it be with us in the future life, when everything that has gratified us in this world: riches, honours, food and drink, dress, beautifully furnished dwellings, and all attractive objects—how will it be, I say, when all these things leave us — when they will all seem to us a dream, and when works of faith and virtue, of abstinence, purity, meekness, humility, mercy, patience, obedience, and others will be required of us?

We ought to have the most lively spiritual union with the heavenly inhabitants, with all the saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs, prelates, venerable and righteous men, as they are all members of one single body, the Church of Christ, to which we sinners also belong, and the living Head of which is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This is why we call upon them in prayer, converse with them, thank and praise them. It is urgently necessary for all Christians to be in union with them if they desire to make Christian progress; for the saints are our friends, our guides to salvation, who pray and intercede for us.

Trample the flesh under foot—that is, its passions. Put it and everything carnal on a level with the dirt, and do not care for it. Lord, Thine is the power; help us! When we count everything carnal and sinful as nothing, then the Lord will be everything to us. The Lord shall then reign in our hearts, upon the ruins of our earthly attachments.

Through our attachment to the flesh, its lusts, or through excessive estimation of the flesh and of everything carnal, the Devil reigns in our hearts, fulfilling his impious will, driving God's kingdom from our hearts, and destroying the work of Jesus Christ, our elevation into heaven. This is true! "Despise the flesh, for it passeth away."[2] But in the present time men of this world set all value upon the flesh and carnal things, and none on the spirit and spiritual things, such as faith and virtue.

The Lord does not dwell in the heart in which reign greediness and attachment to earthly blessings, to earthly pleasures, money, etc. This is daily proved by experience. In such a heart dwell cruelty, pride, presumption, scornfulness, malice, vengeance, envy, avarice, vanity, and boastfulness;

[1] St. John xvii. 21. [2] Troparian to a Saint, a reverend holy Father.

theft, deceitfulness, hypocrisy, and dissimulation; craftiness, flattery, cringing, fornication, profane speaking, violence, treachery, and perjury.

We are all one through unanimity and love, and through spiritual regeneration, and the heavenly Father is everything to all of us. "Our Father, Which art in heaven." We are one brotherhood, with one spirit. "Now, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His."[1] Let us understand this. We are the Church of Christ, of which the Head is Christ Himself, Who is meek and humble, inexhaustible in His mercies to us, if only we live in mutual love. We are the flock; He is the Shepherd. We are the members; He is the Head. How can the members be proud of anything, when they receive everything from the Head?

If we are in lively, active union with the members of Christ here, if we love them in deed and in truth, then God's saints will be in lively, active union with us, and whatever we ask them they will obtain for us from Christ our God, for Whose sake they sacrificed all that was dear to them.

Do we who have received life from God, the Life of all, bring to Him as an offering our life, the fruits of our life, as did our forefathers, the prophets, apostles, martyrs, prelates, venerable and righteous men, and all the saints? Do we even think of this daily? Do we not only live for ourselves? Do we live in accordance with the commandments and ordinances of the Life-Giver? If not, what prevents our doing so! The love of ourselves, self-love. Let us offer our self-love as a sacrifice of love to the Lord, for what are we of ourselves? Sin, corruption.

You are daily asked for alms, and you ought daily to give willingly, without anger, harshness, and murmuring. You do not give your own, but you give that which belongs to God, to God's children, who bear the cross, and have scarcely where to lay their heads. You are only a steward of God's property; you are the daily servant of the least of Christ's brethren; and therefore you must fulfil your duty meekly, humbly, and unwearyingly. You will thus be serving Christ, the Judge and Recompenser—a great honour, a high dignity! Do good work with gladness. Money comes to you easily, without great labour; and you should distribute it easily, without thinking much about it. Your labours are generously rewarded; be generous to others. They are not rewarded in accordance with

[1] Romans viii. 9.

their merit; do not give to others in accordance with their merits, but for their need's sake.

As a passionate man is one spirit with the Devil—and this I and many others feel and experience—so a virtuous man is and remains one spirit with the Lord, and this he feels and experiences, saying: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me";[1] or, as it has been said by the Lord himself: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in me, and I in him";[2] or, again, as the Apostle said: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you?"[3] Thus God's saints are one spirit with the Lord; likewise all those who live piously upon earth. This is a great mystery and a great honour for earthborn creatures. But, also, what shame and destruction it is to the sophistical and disobedient! They are one spirit with the Devil, from whom, Christ our God, deliver us all!

If the truth of something has been revealed in the Word of God, has been investigated and explained to us by the Divinely enlightened mind of the saints, whom God has glorified, and has been recognised by the heart in its light and life-giving effect, then it is a great sin and diabolical pride of the intellect and heart to doubt it and to be perplexed about it.

I myself am every moment a debtor to the Lord, both spiritually and bodily: spiritually through my sins, and bodily through freely receiving His material gifts: food, drink, money, clothing, air, warmth, light, and in general the various comforts of life. How, then, can it be otherwise than a happiness to me to forgive the debts of my neighbour, both spiritual and material, when the Lord forgives me the innumerable multitude of my own debts? How can I do otherwise than freely give the gifts that belong to the Lord when the Lord freely bestows upon me innumerable spiritual and material blessings—the light of the intellect and heart, peace and joy to the heart, a variety of knowledge, and everything else, down to the currents of air? It would be monstrous to do otherwise. We are all one body and members one of another, and are absolutely mutually indebted for something; as in the social body it is impossible to avoid others being indebted to us, or our being indebted to others. And it is impossible for us not to forgive each others debts; as in the body some members naturally often live at the expense of the others—for instance, the stomach at the expense of the head, or of the hands and feet—so it is also amongst men. But the chief thing is to

[1] Galatians ii. 20. [2] St. John vi. 56. [3] 2 Corinthians xiii. 5.

remember that we receive everything freely from God, that we are indebted to Him infinitely much, and that He lovingly forgives us our trespasses, on condition that we forgive them that trespass against us. Let us, therefore, willingly and heartily forgive our neighbours their trespasses against us; let us daily offer this sacrifice unto God and live in love. Let us renounce self-will and the tumult of passions, and entirely submit to the will of God. We are the image of God, and "God is love."[1] Let us, therefore, live in love; let us strive for love with all our might. Lord help us! But let us count everything earthly—food, dress, money—as dross, and do not let us anger God through this dross, by bearing ill-will or enmity against each other. Is it possible that we should sell our Lord for food, for money? One thing only: either God or the flesh. We cannot acknowledge two gods, we cannot serve two. The flesh dictates its own laws to us entirely opposite to the laws of God: gluttony, intemperance, trust in food, drink, money, avarice, or grudging God's gifts to our neighbour; ill will to our neighbour, through food, drink, money; contempt for him through the same hard-heartedness towards his misfortunes, and so on. What must we do, then, in order not to serve God hypocritically? We must crucify the flesh, with its passions and lusts, counting it as nothing, and everything that it values much, that it loves—pleasures, dress, money, houses, carriages—likewise as nothing, as dross, corruption, earth, as indeed they really are; but count love as the most precious thing in life, sacrificing everything to it, submitting everything to it, and neglecting everything for it.

Everyone must know and believe that there is a spiritual, deadly serpent, called the Devil, or Satan, condemned by the Creator to everlasting torments, that can lead away into everlasting torment those who do not believe, are unrighteous and impenitent. Everyone must know and believe that the Saviour was sent from God into the world in order to save men from the deadly shafts of this serpent—that is, from sin and everlasting death; and that this Saviour bestows upon all His saving, healing remedies against the bites of this serpent: faith, penitence, and the Holy Mysteries of His Body and Blood.

There are many drops of rain, but all proceed from a single cloud; there are many rays of the sun, but all proceed from one sun; there are many leaves on a tree, but all are produced by a single tree; there are many grains of sand upon the earth, but they are all from the one same earth. There are also many

[1] 1 John iv. 8, 16.

men, but they all of them derive their origin from the one same Adam, and before all, from God.

For what purpose does the Lord add day after day, year after year, to our existence? In order that we may gradually put away, cast aside, evil from our souls, each one his own, and acquire blessed simplicity; in order that we may become, for instance, gentle as lambs, simple as infants; in order that we may learn not to have the least attachment to earthly things, but like loving, simple children, may cling with all our hearts to God alone, and love Him with all our hearts, all our souls, all our strength, and all our thoughts, and our neighbour as ourselves. Let us hasten, therefore, to pray to the Lord, fervently and tearfully, to grant us simplicity of heart, and let us strive by every means to cast out the evil from our souls—for instance, evil suspiciousness, malevolence, malignity, malice, pride, arrogance, boastfulness, scornfulness, impatience, despondency, despair, irascibility and irritability, fearfulness and faint-heartedness, envy, avarice, gluttony, and satiety; fornication, mental and of the heart, and actual fornication; the love of money, and in general the passion for acquisition; slothfulness, disobedience, and all the dark horde of sins. Lord, without Thee we can do nothing! Bless us Thyself in this work, and give us the victory over our enemies and our passions. So be it!

Let us put away from us our spiritual short-sightedness, and let us cease concentrating all our attention upon temporal, earthly things; let us foresee with our mental vision the future, everlasting life, and rise in our hearts to our heavenly country. Indeed, it is wonderful short-sightedness for the immortal soul only to look upon the present, visible things, generally relating to the senses, and flattering our carnal nature, and not contemplate the life of the world to come—the blessings which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," but which the Most Merciful and the Most Wise "God hath prepared for them that love Him."[1] Of what do we not deprive ourselves through this voluntary short-sightedness! Like flies we adhere to earthly sweets, and do not wish to rise up, to tear ourselves away from them. Blessed is he who despises the joys of this world; there shall be no end to his bliss.

As in the earthly life there are poor and rich, so also in the spiritual life, in the spiritual order, there are also poor and rich. As the poor ask charity of the rich and well-to-do,

[1] 1 Corinthians ii. 9.

and cannot live without their help, so also in the spiritual order the poor must have recourse to the spiritually rich. We are the spiritually poor, whilst the saints, or those who shine even in this present life by their faith and piety, are the spiritually rich. It is to them that we needy ones must have recourse. We must beg for their prayers that they may help us to become simple as infants; that they may teach us spiritual wisdom, how to conquer sins, how to love God and our neighbour. And therefore pray for me, saints of God—prophets, apostles, martyrs, prelates, venerable and righteous men—that I may become like unto you!

When you pray to the Lord, represent to yourself vividly to whom you are praying. You are praying to the unoriginated, endless King of all creatures, to the All-holy, All-merciful, Almighty, Most-wise, Omnipresent, All-righteous God, Whom millions of millions of angels of various orders revere, Whom the armies of martyrs, the companies of prophets and apostles, the assemblies of prelates, venerable and righteous men praise. When you pray to the Holy Virgin, Our Lady, also represent to yourself Her unprecedented holiness, Her greatness, mercy, wisdom, Her helpfulness to all, and the humble worship rendered unto Her by the assemblies of angels and men.

We must constantly bear in remembrance and strive to live in accordance with the mystery of our redemption by Christ, His sufferings, His death on the cross, and His resurrection and ascension, and His second coming; we must honour above all the holiness of the Mother of God as the living ark and temple of the Godhead, and ask Her, after the Lord Himself, for cleansing and holiness, and steadfastness in faith and love.

Avoid flattery, audacity, and taking the law into your own hands. Our soul has a passion for doing this when others do something differently to what we would like them to, or do not do what we would like them to. Bear with this; think how it would be if others revenged themselves upon you immediately after you had done something not in accordance with their will, or after you had not fulfilled that which you might and ought to have done. "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise;"[1] or keep to the rule: "We forgive them that trespass against us." Man is duty personified. We must here remember that our heart is extremely capricious, evil, and foolish. Sometimes we take a violent dislike to a person without any cause or reason,

[1] St. Luke vi. 31.

and nourish malice in our heart against him, and are ready to offend him without any cause. We must despise the natural and unjust malice of the heart, and pray to God to drive away from our heart this stench of the abyss of hell. Let us remember what we were commanded: "These things I command you that ye love one another."[1]

The life of the heart is love, whilst malice and enmity against our brother are its death. The Lord keeps us on the earth in order that love for God and our neighbour may wholly penetrate our heart. This is what He expects from us all. This is, indeed, the purpose of the world's standing.

My daily greatest misfortune is my sins, wounding and gnawing at my heart. But against this misfortune there is also a daily greatest Deliverer and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He daily benefits me, invisibly, bountifully. Poor sinners! Learn to know this Saviour as I know Him, by His grace, by His gifts.

You are angry with your neighbour, your brother, and say of him: "He is such and such—a miser, malicious, proud," or that he has done this and that, and so on. What is that to you? He sins against God, and not against you. God is his Judge, not you: unto God he shall answer for himself, not to you. Know yourself, how sinful you are yourself, what a beam you have in your own eye; how difficult it is for you to master and get the better of your own sins; how afflicted you yourself are by them; how they have ensnared you—how you wish for indulgence from others towards your own infirmities. And your brother is a man like you; therefore you must be indulgent to him as to a sinful man, similar in everything to yourself, as infirm as you; love him, then, as yourself, listening to the Lord saying: "These things I command you, that ye love one another";[2] and as you pray for yourself, that the Lord may help you to root out your own cruel and incurable passions, so pray also for your brother, that the Lord may free him from the flattery and corruption of his passions, from their darkness and opression. We must remember that we are one sinful body, more or less infected in our members by the breathing of the "common enemy—the Devil"; and that of ourselves, without God's grace, we are powerless to free ourselves from this deadly and darkening breathing: only the Holy Ghost by His breathing can drive away this demoniacal darkness of the passions, through the power of the Lord Jesus Christ's sufferings upon the cross. We must therefore humbly pray to the Lord, in

[1] St. John xv. 17. [2] St. John xv. 17.

the spirit of brotherly love, for all our brethren and for all people, that they may escape from the darkness of the passions and their great attractiveness, in which they delight, not knowing their destructiveness; for instance: the rich man rejoices in his wealth; the ambitious one—in his distinctions; the glutton—in his food, drink, and dainties; the malicious—in his malice; the envious—in the sufferings of the victim of his envy; and so on.

As the Lord hears every word of the prayer, "God, have mercy upon me," and fulfils every word (this is from experience), if only we speak from the depths of our heart; so, likewise, He hears and fulfils all the words of other prayers, even our own particular sincere prayers. O, Lord, Who so graciously heareth us, glory to Thee! "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth. . . . ."[1] Only pray in the simplicity of your heart, and without doubting.

By striking our bodily structure with sickness, the Lord crushes the old, sinful, carnal man, in order to give strength to the new man, whom we have weakened by the works of the flesh: gluttony, slothfulness, amusements, and manifold sinful attachments and passions. "For when I am weak, then am I strong."[2] Therefore, we must accept every malady with gratitude.

God's Saints are great through their spiritual disposition, through their faith, their firm trust in God, and their burning love to God, for Whose sake they despised all earthly things. O, how null we are, compared to them; how unlike unto them! They are great by their great deeds of abstinence, vigilance, fasting, unceasing prayers, their diligence in studying the Word of God, and in pious meditation. O, how unlike we are to them! How deeply we must venerate them! With what reverence we must ask for their prayers for us! But in no case must we regard them lightly, irreverently, remembering their godliness and their union with the Godhead.

I thank Thee, my Lord, my Master, and my Judge, for teaching me how to pray simply to Thee, for hearing my calling upon Thee, for saving me from my sins and sorrows, and for rightly directing my ways. I called upon Thee (in the sin of my wickedness) in the words of the church prayer: "O, Lord, our God, Who grantest forgiveness unto men through repentance. . . . ." And as soon as I finished this

[1] St. Matthew vii. 8. [2] 2 Corinthians xii. 10.

prayer, peace and lightness established themselves in my soul (29th June, 1864).

Do not listen to the calumnies of the enemy against your neighbour, his abominations, his various wickednesses, and his pride. Look upon everybody simply, respectfully, as upon the image of God; and do not think any evil of him without reason.

When you are praying either inwardly only, or both inwardly and outwardly, be firmly convinced that the Lord is there, by you and within you, and hears every word, even if only said to yourself, even when you only pray mentally; speak from your whole heart, sincerely, judge yourself likewise sincerely, without in the least justifying yourself; have faith that the Lord will have mercy upon you—and you will not remain unforgiven. This is true. It is taken from experience.

You are angry with your neighbour, you despise him, do not like to speak peaceably and lovingly to him, because there is something harsh, abrupt, careless, unpleasant to you in his character, in his speech, in his manners—because he is more conscious of his dignity than perhaps is necessary; or because he may be somewhat proud and disrespectful; but you yourself, your neighbour's physician and teacher, are more guilty than him. "Physician, heal thyself."[1] Teacher, teach yourself. Your own malice is the bitterest of all evils. Is it then possible to correct malice by means of evil? Having a beam in your own eye, can you pull out the mote from the eye of another? Evil and faults are corrected by good, by love, kindness, meekness, humility, and patience. Acknowledge yourself as the greatest of sinners, of those who appear to you to be sinners, or are sinners in reality; consider yourself worse and lower than all; wrest out every pride and malice against your neighbour, all impatience and fury, and only then try to cure others. Until then cover the sins of others with your indulgent love. What would it be if everyone were to notice all their neighbour's iniquities? Eternal animosity and discord; for who is without sin? And, therefore, we are commanded to forgive all those who trespass against us; for if the Lord will be extreme to mark our iniquities, who of us may abide before His justice?[2] "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you."[3] We stand before the altar of love in the presence of Incarnate Love Itself, but we have no love to each other. How strange it is! And we do

[1] St. Luke iv. 23. [2] Psalm cxxx. 3. [3] St. Matthew vi. 14.

not even care about this. But love will not come of itself without our zeal, efforts and activity.

Lover of men, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, I thank Thee from all my heart, for having heard my prayer to love my neighbour and despise earthly things, and for having poured into my heart peaceful, reasonable and sweet love. Strengthen these in me, O God, through the prayers of Our Most Pure Lady, Thy Mother, and may I be Thy child, O Lord, and Her truest child. 26 July, 1864. 11 o'clock, evening.

O, how beautiful, how precious a creature is man! O, what a most graceful and splendid palm-tree is man! O, man is the best of God's creatures! O, most honourable of God's creatures, that ought, as the image of God, as the justly-revered temple of God Himself, to be inviolable to anything impure! May all impure, evil, blasphemous thoughts, as well as all doubting thoughts, flee from us. We are—the children of God; we are—holy in Christ; let us keep, let us preserve our hearts in holiness, so that the hand of the impure and evil spirits may not in any way touch us, the living arks of God, our thoughts and hearts! Word of God and God Thyself, Who wast incarnate for our sakes, preserve us in Thy holiness! Our Most Holy Head! Deliver not our hearts and bodies to the impure Satan, let him not sully them by evil thoughts, but ever dwell with us and keep us pure and spotless. Grant, Lord, that as members of Thy Body, we may ever have living union with Thee, our Most Divine Head—union in the thoughts of our hearts, in our prayers, and in our deeds. The falling away of our hearts from Thee is—darkness and death, sorrow and straitness, shame, humiliation and the spiritual abomination, whilst with Thee we find—light, life, peace, joy, wideness of heart, boldness, greatness and holiness.

You know that eternal life in God is promised you, that you must earn it by obedience to God and His Church during this transitory life, by patience in sickness, sorrows, misfortunes and various privations—and yet you do not wish to obey the Creator, you live in carelessness and neglect of your souls, in neglect of virtue, in continual sin! What can you expect after this, ungrateful, evil-natured, and disobedient creatures? My soul, think and direct all your earthly life to the glory of God and the good of your neighbour. Do not gratify flesh and blood, but seek to please your Lord; for flesh and blood are—perishable like all earthly things.

Why be suspicious, where there should be no suspicion?

For instance, during reading and listening to the Word of God, or during the reading and singing in church, during the prayers, etc. God is truth, and that is enough; the Church is "the pillar and ground of truth";[1] The Devil is—falsehood itself, the calumniator, the adversary—that is enough. Know the one God and His truth; shun the Devil and his lies, illusions and follies.

The demons tremble at the sight and even at the sign of the life-giving cross, because the Son of God was nailed to the wood of the cross and sanctified it by His sufferings upon it; how much more do the demons tremble before Our Lady, the Mother of God, and even at Her Most Holy name? Our Lady is like the brightest star: she is all radiant with the Light—in God, she is like a glowing ember in a large fire, all-luminous and full of fire. As it is easy to think that He, God, is Light and Holiness, so it is that She, too, is eternal light and eternal holiness. Amen.

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever";[2] as likewise God's truth—everything that is read in the Gospel, the Holy Scriptures, the Church prayers, the Canons, the Acathistos, the Psalms—is the one same eternal truth; it is the same now, as when you first found it, or when you prayed with a fervent heart, and felt its full verity, its sweetness, peace and life-giving effect. You change and place yourself in various relations to it, but the truth itself remains for ever the same—the eternal enlightening, warning and life-giving sun.

How long will it be before the Holy Mysteries of which we partake remind us that, "we, who are many, are one body";[3] and how long will there be no mutual hearty union between us, as members of the single body of Christ? How long shall we make our own laws of life be inimical to each other, envy each other, torment, grieve, fret, judge and abuse each other? When will the Spirit of Christ abide in us, the spirit of meekness, humility, kindness, love unfeigned, self-denial, patience, chastity, abstinence, simplicity and sincerity, contempt for earthly things and entire aspiration after heavenly ones? Lord Jesus Christ! enlighten our spiritual vision and "let Thy loving Spirit lead us all into the land of righteousness."[4] Give us Thy Spirit!

The Lord is everything to us all, for we cannot do anything of ourselves, for ourselves. He is the Giver of all powers,

[1] 1 Timothy iii. 15.
[2] Hebrews xiii. 8.
[3] 1 Corinthians x. 17.
[4] Psalm cxliii. 10.

all blessings and of everything necessary for our welfare. Let us cast all our sorrows, cares and anxiety upon the Lord.

During prayer, be like a lisping infant, mingling your spirit in one with the spirit of the prayer you are pronouncing. Count yourself as nothing and accept the prayer as a great gift of God. Renounce your own carnal wisdom and do not listen to it, for carnal "knowledge puffeth up,"[1] it doubts, imagines, blasphemes. If, during prayer or at any other time, the enemy hinders your soul by any kind of blasphemy or abominations, do not become despondent in consequence of them, but say firmly in your heart: It was for the cleansing from these and like sins that our Lord Jesus Christ came upon earth; it was to heal these and other like infirmities of spirit that the Most Merciful came to help us; and if you say these words with faith, your heart will be immediately at rest: for the Lord will cleanse your heart. In general, you must not fall into despondency through any sin or evil imagination, but trust in the Saviour. O, boundless Mercy and Compassion of God! O, most great service of the God-Man to us sinners! And even until now He serves us in His love for men, cleansing and saving us. And therefore let the dominion of the enemy be covered with shame!

By praising your pious neighbour—you praise God; by doing good to your neighbour—you do good to yourself, for we are—one body; by doing good to your neighbour—you make God your debtor, for your neighbour is the image of God, and God—is everything in all. By doing good to a Christian—you make Christ, the Son of God, your debtor, for Christians are His body, His members. By lending to a Christian—you lend to the Holy Ghost, for Christians are the temples of the Holy Ghost. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"[2]

God created man after His own image and likeness—this is an infinitely great gift; but man, a reasonably free creature, became ungrateful to His Creator, offended Him by his perfidy and faithlessness, by his pride; he wished to become equal to his Creator and went against Him. Every sin is a war against God. But, O infinite gift of God's love to men! When we had fallen so low by having sinned against the Creator, when we had fallen from life into death, by turning away from God, our Life; when we had corrupted ourselves by sins, and when everlasting death threatened us—God sent upon earth the Redeemer of the World, His own Only-begotten Son, in flesh like unto ours, to suffer for

[1] 1 Corinthians viii. 1. [2] 1 Corinthians iii. 16.

our offences and thus cleanse us from sins, through repentance and faith in Him, and bring us again to His Father, from Whom we had fallen away. Let us value this, God's greatest benefit to us, and let us not "neglect so great salvation!"[1] Let us constantly remember our sinful corruption, and the means of grace offered by the Church for our regeneration. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."[2] Are we new or the same as of old, with the same sins as before?

The Mother of God is one flesh and blood, and one spirit with the Saviour, as His Mother. So infinitely great was Her merit by the grace of God that she became the Mother of God Himself, giving Him most pure and most sacred flesh, nourishing Him with Her milk, carrying Him in Her arms, clothing Him, caring in every way for Him in His infancy, kissing Him over and over again, and caressing Him. O Lord, who can describe the greatness of the God-bearing Virgin? "Every tongue is in doubt how to worthily praise Thee, even the angelic mind itself wonders how to hymn Thee, Mother of God. . . . ."[3] We must call upon Her with one thought and simple impulse of the heart. . . . . She is one with God, like the Saints.

Know and remember, that the matter of your salvation is always near to the heart of Our Lady, the Mother of God, for it was for this that the Son of God, by the favour of the Father, and the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, chose Her out of all generations and was incarnate of Her in order to save the human race from sin, the curse and the eternal death, or everlasting torments. As the matter of our salvation is near to the Saviour, so likewise it is near to Her. Turn to Her with full faith, trust, and love.

Christ, the Son of God, the Most Holy God, "is not ashamed to call us sinners brethren;"[4] therefore do not at least be ashamed to call brothers and sisters poor, obscure, simple people, whether they be your relatives according to the flesh or not, do not be proud in your intercourse with them, do not despise them, for we are all actually brothers in Christ—we were all born of water and the Spirit in the baptismal font and became children of God; we are all called Christians, we are all nourished with the Body and Blood of the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, the sacraments of the Church are celebrated over all of us, we all pray the Lord's prayer: "Our Father . . . . ." and all of us equally call God our Father. We do not know any other relationship besides the spiritual, the highest, the eternal

[1] Hebrews ii. 3. [2] 2 Corinthians v. 17.
[3] Hirmos from the Canon at Christmas. [4] Hebrews ii. 11.

relationship, which was given to us by the Lord of our life, the Creator, and the Regenerator of our nature, Jesus Christ, for this relationship is alone true, holy, lasting, whilst earthly relationship is untrue, changeable, inconstant, transitory, corruptible as our flesh and blood are corruptible. And therefore be simple in your intercourse with your fellow-men, as an equal with equals, and do not exalt yourself above anyone, but, on the contrary, humble yourself. "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."[1] Do not say: I am educated and he or she—is not, he or she—is a simple uneducated peasant; the gift of God is given to you, an unworthy one: do not turn it into an occasion for pride, but into an occasion for humility, for "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."[2] Do not say: I am of noble birth, and he is of low birth—earthly nobility, without the nobility of faith and virtue, is—an idle name. What is there in my nobility, when I am as much a sinner as others, or perhaps even worse? And we must love our neighbour, not in our way, but in God's way, that is, not according to our will, but in accordance with the Will of God. Our will is only to love those who love us, and to despise, hate, and persecute our enemies or those who are displeasing to us from some reason or other. But God desires that we should love these still more, because they are sick; so that we ourselves, being also sick with self-love, scorn and malice, should cure ourselves by love and humility, applying this same all-healing plaster also to the wounds of their hearts. In curing the spiritual maladies of others, we must not in any case be arrogant nor bear malice, nor become angry and get out of temper, nor think of our own advantage instead of our neighbour's, and serve our own self-love and, in general, our own passions. "Charity is not provoked" by the thoughtless or arrogant behaviour of its neighbour, "but suffereth long, and is kind. . . . . Vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up . . . . . thinketh no evil,"[3] does not take account of every word and screens everything. Yes, this is right: for what you screen by indulgence, often easily passes away of itself. And therefore he who strives to cure others, must himself be in good health, so that he may not be told: "Physician, heal thyself."[4] If the man, whom you strive to heal, notices that you yourself are evil, angry, and do not love him, then he will inwardly despise and hate you, and you will not produce any effect upon him by anything, for evil is not amended by evil, but by good. "Overcome evil with good,"[5] first root out in yourself that which you wish to root out in others.

[1] St. Luke xviii. 14. [2] St. Luke xii. 48. [3] 1 Corinthians xiii. 4-5.
[4] St. Luke iv. 23. [5] Romans xii. 21.

Worldly cares obscure the mental horizon of our soul; like mist, they darken the spiritual vision and bind the soul. But be careful for nothing, and cast all your sorrows and anxieties upon the Lord, in accordance with the Spirit-bearing teaching of the apostle. Do not grudge any expenses incurred for others; these are a pledge of new and greater bounties from the Lord to you.

Some seem to be praying to the Lord, but are in reality serving the Devil, who nestles in their hearts, because they pray only with their lips, whilst their hearts are cold, do not feel, and do not desire that which the lips ask and say, and are "far from"[1] the Lord. Likewise, there are many communicants who communicate of the Body and Blood of Christ insincerely, not with great love, but only with their mouths and bellies, with little faith, coldly, with hearts attached to food, drink and money, or inclined to pride, malice, envy, slothfulness, and far from Him Who is all love, holiness, perfection, great wisdom, and unspeakable goodness. It is needful for such persons to go deeper into themselves, to repent more deeply, and think profoundly of what prayer is, and what Holy Communion is. Coldness of heart towards God, towards prayer, proceeds from the Devil, he is the coldness of hell; but let us, as children of God, love the Lord with burning love. Grant us this, our Lord, for without Thee "we can do nothing."[2] For Thou art—everything to us, whilst we ourselves are—nothing. Thou hast brought us from nonentity into being, and hast provided us with everything.

To repent—means to feel in our hearts the falsehood, the madness, the guilt of our sins, it means—to acknowledge that we have offended, by them, our Creator, our Lord, our Father and Benefactor, Who is infinitely holy, and infinitely abhors sin, it means, to desire, with the whole soul, to amend and to expiate our sins.

Remind the Christian who has sinned voluntarily or involuntarily, more frequently of his dignity, that he has been made godly, and that our nature is placed upon the throne with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Tell the Jew, Mahometan, or heathen—at a fitting occasion—of what they deprive themselves by lingering in unbelief, tell them how our nature has been raised, ennobled, filled with grace by the Son of God; exhort Christians to give

[1] Isaiah xxix. 13. [2] St. John xv. 5.

up sinning for the sake of this nobility of their nature and draw unbelievers to the faith of Christ.

"The great Litany." In accordance with it, we are all—one. In the litany are enumerated all the members of the Church—the body of Christ—first the earthly members, and then the heavenly ones. Such is the character of all the Divine services of the Russian Orthodox Church: of the vespers, matins, Liturgy. With what a spirit, with what elevation of the thoughts, with what love, must the priest pray to God "in behalf of all, and for all."[1]

Throughout the prayers and hymns of the Church moves the Spirit of Truth. Everything contradictory and blasphemous that comes into the head, from without, proceeds from the Devil, the father of lies, the calumniator; the prayers and psalms are the breathing of the Holy Ghost.

He who prays to the Lord, to the Mother of God, to the Angels and Saints, must first of all endeavour to amend his heart, and his life, and afterwards to imitate Them, as it is written: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."[2] "Be ye holy; for I am holy."[3] Those who pray to the Mother of God must imitate Her humility, Her unimaginable purity, submission to the Will of God (for instance, when you see injustice), and Her patience; those who pray to the Angels must think of the higher life, and strive for spirituality, gradually laying aside all fleshliness and carnal passions, striving also after ardent love for God, and their neighbour; let those who pray to the Saints imitate them in their love for God, and their contempt of the world or its vain blessings, their prayers, abstinence, disinterestedness, patience in sickness, sorrows, and misfortunes, their love for their neighbour. Otherwise, the prayers will be as useless as beating the air.

He who prays must hunger after, must ardently desire those blessings—especially the spiritual ones—the forgiveness of sins, the cleansing, the sanctification, the strengthening in virtue, for which he prays, otherwise, it will be a useless waste of words. The same applies to thanking and praising the Lord; hunger and thirst to constantly thank and praise the Lord, for everything comes from Him, everything is the gift of His goodness and mercy.

[1] Prayer at the Liturgy during the Oblation.
[2] St. Luke vi. 36. [3] 1 Peter i. 16.

The Lord—is my being; the Lord—is my deliverance from everlasting death; the Lord—is my eternal life; the Lord—is my cleansing and deliverance from a multitude of iniquities, and my sanctification. The Lord is—strength in my weakness, space in my straitness, trust in my faint-heartedness and despondency; the Lord—is a life-giving fire in my coldness; the Lord—is light in my darkness, peace in my disturbance; the Lord—is the intercessor in my temptations; He is my thinking, my desire, my activity; He is—the light of my soul and body, food, drink, and raiment, my shield, my weapons. The Lord is everything to me. My soul, love and thank the Lord constantly! "Praise the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me praise His Holy Name. Praise the Lord, O my soul: and forget not all His benefits; Who forgiveth all thy sin; and healeth all thine infirmities; Who saveth thy life from destruction; and crowneth thee with mercy and lovingkindness; Who satistieth thy mouth with good things."[1]

"All ye are brethren."[2] "Love one another."[3] The Church is like a great, holy family of God, in which God Himself is—the Father; the Most Holy Virgin, the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ—our Mother; the Angels and Saints—elder brothers; and all of us—younger brothers, born of the same mother and begotten of the Church in the baptismal font by the Holy Ghost. The younger brothers are naturally obliged to respect the elder, are naturally subordinate to them, and, being not yet perfect, ask the elder ones to pray to God for them, as they are God's friends, whose intercession is favourably received by the Lord. The children of the Heavenly Father have the prayer previously given to them by His Son: "Our Father. . . . ."

Lord! Thou camest to save us through faith in Thee; behold, I truly believe that Thou art my Saviour—save me! Thou camest to renew my nature, corrupted by sin—renew me, I who have corrupted myself by passions and carnal desires, renew me, both spiritually and bodily, so that I may be pure in heart and strong in body to the glory of Thy Name. Thou camest to deliver us from the works of the enemy—deliver me from the works of the most evil, impure, and abominable enemy, warring in my members and inclining me, drawing me forcibly to sin. Thou camest to enlighten us—enlighten my heart, darkened by passions. Thou camest to gather together that which was scattered—gather together my thoughts, scattered by the enemy. Thou camest to strengthen us in our weakness, and said: "For My strength is made perfect in weakness"; and Thine apostle says: "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the

[1] Psalm ciii. 1–5. [2] St. Matthew xxiii. 8. [3] St. John xv. 17.

power of Christ may rest upon me";[1] behold I am most infirm, and without Thee can do no good thing; without Thee I cannot think or feel anything good, cannot wish or speak, or do anything good. I am positively powerless for any good without Thee; bestow Thy grace upon me, give me light and strength to think and feel good that which is, and to easily speak and do that which shall please Thee. Behold, I commit all my life unto Thee, Christ my God, my Saviour, my Regenerator, cleanse, sanctify, and save me. "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."[2] Help me: for without Thee my destruction is near and speedy at every hour.

By their malice towards us, by their craftiness against us, and by their various offences against us, men are worthy of our special pity and love, as those who are sick and perishing, and who have become the tools of our most wicked enemy—the Devil, who teaches us every evil, and who seeks, through beings like unto ourselves, to bring some affliction and missortune upon us. But these afflictions and misfortunes are very, very advantageous to us, for they reveal to us the wounds of our heart, which we had not seen nor felt before.

When some inward disturbance or weakness of the heart prevents your pronouncing the words of the prayers during Divine service, then consider such disturbance and weakness as an illusion of the enemy, of the demon; throw aside the despondency, the faint-heartedness, and timidity, and speak concerning the name of the Lord without hurrying, calmly and intentionally louder; you will thus overcome your disturbance and weakness, and will obtain courage and strength. Everything is possible unto those who believe and trust. We must struggle and conquer.

Love your neighbour as yourself; for, by loving your neighbour you love yourself, whilst by hating your neighbour, you before all do harm to yourself, you before all hate your own soul. You know this by experience. O, most wise, creative, and life-giving laws of the Lord! How good it is to fulfil them, although the flattery of sin makes their fulfilment difficult. How blessed is the Lord's yoke for the soul, and how light His burden, that is, His commands.

If you have Christian love for your neighbour, then all heaven will love you; if you have union of spirit with your fellow-creatures, then you shall have union with God and all the dwellers of heaven; if you are merciful to your neighbour,

[1] 2 Corinthians xii. 9. [2] Psalm li. 10.

then God and all the Angels and Saints will be merciful to you; if you pray for others, then all heaven will intercede for you. The Lord our God is holy, be so yourself also.

You earth-born creatures, who have not purity, triumph in the fact that the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, has entirely and superabundantly attained the purity of soul and body unattainable to you; triumph in this, and pray to Her, that She may teach you and your children to pass your lives in purity in this corrupt world, so full of temptations. It is because of Her purity, humility, and virtues, and because She was found worthy of becoming the Mother of God the Word, that, when offering the bloodless sacrifice, we offer gratitude to the Heavenly Father, and say: "Especially to the Most Holy . . . . Glorious Lady, the Mother of God . . . ."[1] —that is, we offer to Thee our verbal service, glory, and thanksgiving.

How corrupt I am become through sin! Anything bad, evil, impure immediately enters into my thoughts and is felt in my heart, whilst anything good, right, pure, holy—is often only thought and spoken of, and not felt. Woe unto me! for as yet evil is nearer to my heart than good. Besides this, we are at once ready to do evil as soon as it is thought of or felt, and we do it quickly and easily if we have no fear of God, whilst "how to perform that which is good I find not"[2] the power within me, and the intended good work is often put off indefinitely.

Pray for others as you would pray for yourself, for we are one, as the children of the Heavenly Father.

The chief conditions in supplicatory prayer are—faith in God; a sincere, firm desire for those blessings for which we ask, and a disinclination or aversion for those sins of which we repent. But it often happens that we desire with the tongue and thought while the heart remains insensible, or it is as though our tongue had an aversion to the sins and not our heart, and we continue to linger in the same sins from which we daily pray to be delivered. And the prophecy of Isaiah "This people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart from Me"[3]—is fulfilled in us.

When your heart is touched by thoughts of fornication, or impurity, evil, or blasphemy, or when thoughts of malice, envy, avarice, covetousness, gluttony, darken, wound, and

[1] From the Liturgy. [2] Romans vii. 18. [3] Isaiah xxix. 13.

oppress you, then say to yourself, with firm, heartfelt conviction, that all this is an imagination of the Devil, and all such ideas and thoughts shall immediately vanish. Blessed is he that "speaketh the truth from his heart."[1] Tortured will be he who imagines or thinks of evil and sin in his heart! "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil."[2] Despise the carnal delight of sin, for it is a provocation of the perishable flesh. When a thought of doubt in the truth comes to you, say, that this thought is an illusion, whilst the truth remains—eternal truth.

What am I? Upon the one side sin, an abyss of sin, all opposition to my God, the Creator and Worker of everything, deserving of every condemnation and torment; upon the other, entire poverty in every virtue and infirmity for every virtue. So deeply have I fallen and become corrupt and impotent. Without my Saviour I can do nothing in accordance with His Word and in accordance with mine own innumerable experiences. He has created me, soul and body; He has reared me; He has educated my faculties; He still continues to accomplish everything that is good within me if I do anything good, whilst I of myself am only evil. But, my Creator and my Redeemer, Thou hast created me; I am Thy creature, Thy servant. Direct me and fulfil Thy will through me. Grant me Thy grace, that I may entirely subdue my will to Thy will, for I cannot do this without Thy grace. Thou, my Shepherd, pasture me. Thou, my Saviour, save me. Thou, my light, enlighten me. Thou, my strength, strengthen me.

"What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?"[3] Not the slightest. "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord,"[4] and the Lord withdraws Himself from the heart in which such thoughts nestle. This we feel in our own selves. And therefore, in order that the Lord may unite Himself with anybody, it is necessary that that man should be perfectly free from the impurity of sin and be adorned with virtues, or that he should believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who took upon Himself the sins of the whole world; that he should acknowledge his sins, should sincerely condemn them, considering them foolish, and that he should ask with all his heart to be forgiven them, firmly intending not to sin again in future. It was in this manner that all the saints were united with the Lord and became holy. How holy therefore must be our Lady, the Mother of God, with Whom God the Word Himself, the Light

[1] Psalm xv. 2, 3.
[2] Romans ii. 9.
[3] 2 Corinthians vi. 14.
[4] Proverbs xv. 26.

everlasting, was most truly united: "the true light, Which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world,"[1] whom "the Holy Ghost came upon," and whom "the power of the Most High overshadowed"![2] How holy and most holy must be our Lady, the Mother of the Lord, Who became the temple of God, not made with hands, and was entirely penetrated, in all Her thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds, by the Holy Ghost, and from Whose blood the Creator Himself made flesh for Himself? Truly She is most holy, firm, steadfast, immovable, unchangeable throughout all eternity in Her most high, divine holiness, for the all-perfect God, Who humanly became Her Son, made Her all-perfect by reason of Her most great humility, Her love of purity and the source of purity, God; Her entire renunciation of the world, and Her attachment with all Her thoughts to the heavenly kingdom, and especially by reason of the fact that She became His Mother, carried Him in Her womb, and afterwards in Her most-pure arms, nourished with Her most-pure milk, Him Who feeds all creatures, cared for Him, caressed Him, suffered and sorrowed for Him, shed tears for Him, lived Her whole life for Him, for Him alone was wholly absorbed in His Spirit and was one heart, one soul with Him, one holiness with Him! O highest unity of love and holiness of the most-pure Virgin Mary and Her Divine Son, the Lord Jesus Christ! Wonderful, too, are God's saints by their entire love for the Lord, by the streams of blood and sweat they shed out of love for the Lord.

O infinitely great Benefactor, my Saviour! When I represent to myself the infinite corruption of my nature by manifold sins and passions, my spirit is despondent and downcast, but as soon as I remember Thee, that Thou camest to renew my nature, corrupted by sin, and to bestow upon my dishonour, upon my shame, the nobility of the angels, and even a still higher nobility than that of the angels, the nobility of the Son of God Himself, through faith in Thee, through regeneration by water and the Spirit, and through the communion of Thy Holy Sacrament, then my spirit instantaneously rises up from its despondency, shakes off the infamy of the passions, and is wholly filled with gratitude to Thee. Glory to Thee, O infinite Mercy and Power, Son of God!

Do not, therefore, grow despondent, sinners like unto me, but only believe in the Son of God. Sinners, esteem one another, and do not despise any sinner, for we are all sinners, and the Son of God came to save, to cleanse, and to raise all up to heaven.

[1] St. John i. 8. [2] St. Luke i. 35.

"We forgive them that trespass against us." This means not to feel against our neighbour who has been guilty towards us (intentionally, obstinately, or unintentionally) any vexation, enmity, or malice, but to forgive him his fault in all simplicity of heart, vividly representing to ourselves our own infirmities and falling into sin, and maintaining towards our guilty neighbour the same love and the same feelings of kindness which we felt towards him before his fault. What would it be if the Lord were to notice our iniquities as we do the faults of our neighbour? Who could withstand? But as the Lord is long-suffering and merciful, be also long-suffering and merciful (not strictly exacting, but compassionate). "Charity suffereth long, and is kind."[1] Do not reckon the faults of your neighbour, consider them as though they were not; as nothing! We are one body, and his body is a sinful one. What is more common and easier to us than sins? We breathe them like air. But the Lord, the Head of the body of the Church, is the cleansing of them. Leave everything to the Head, Who worketh all things in all; and hold fast to love alone, for it is the only infallible thing in our life (pure love). Do not serve the Devil by the spirit of enmity, malice, hatred; do not increase evil by evil, and do not spread the kingdom of the enemy in the kingdom of Christ. "Overcome evil with good."[2] For you cannot conquer evil with evil, just as you cannot put out fire by fire, but only by water. Malice is always an imagination of the Devil. Love is always God's truth and God's child.

Attachment to earthly and carnal things to the oblivion of God, of the soul, proceeds from the Devil, who, through attachments to earthly things, makes our heart carnal, earthly, a shameful vessel of passions, whilst it ought to be meditating upon heavenly things, to be spiritual and the temple of the Holy Ghost. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon;"[3] you cannot serve God and riches, God and the flesh, God and the world, God and earthly delights; therefore, you must rule your flesh and your heart, for this is the science of sciences, the art of arts. I am sometimes flesh, and sometimes spirit. O inconstancy! O ingratitude! O slothfulness! O long-suffering of God! But how long shall I change like the moon, or like a kaleidoscope? Lord, stablish me on the rock of Thy commandments!

The crucified flesh reconciles itself with the spirit and with God; whilst the flesh that is cherished, that is abundantly and daintily fed, fights hard against the spirit and against God,

[1] 1 Corinthians xiii. 4. [2] Romans xii. 21. [3] St. Matthew vi. 24.

and becomes wholly an abomination of sin. It does not want to pray, and, in general, rebels against God by blasphemy, for instance, and estranges itself from God. This is from experience. Therefore, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."[1]

Christ "came upon earth in order to raise us up to heaven."[2] Do we aspire to the realisation of the object of our beloved Saviour's coming upon earth? Do we meditate upon heavenly things? Do we long for the heavenly kingdom? Let us ask ourselves these questions, and answer them more frequently. Do we sufficiently value the Saviour's teaching and preaching, His sufferings and death? Do we not trample upon His whole edifice by clinging to earthly instead of heavenly things? Yea, Lord.

Thou alone knowest the cares, labours, and sweat of Thy saints, in order to purify themselves to please Thee, the Father of all. Thou alone knowest Thy saints. Teach us to imitate them in our lives, so that we too may be in union with all through love.

Why do the children of this world often scoff at that which is truth, light, sweetness, our life—I mean at the Divine service of the Church, the Church-reading and singing, or at Thy saints glorified by Thee? "These speak evil of those things which they know not."[3] "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,"[4] and enlighten them!

Love does not reflect. Love is simple. Love never mistakes. Likewise believe and trust without reflection, for faith and trust are also simple; or better: God, in whom we believe and in whom we trust, is an incomplex Being, as He is also simply love. Amen.

Why do we read the Acathistos to Jesus Christ and to the Mother of God? In order that we may enter into the spirit of the Lord and that of His most-pure Mother; in order that we may recognise the greatness of the gift, which was revealed in Christ's incarnation and our redemption, and in bestowing upon us His Body and Blood in the Holy Sacrament, and in order that we may worthily receive this gift.

The Lord is so holy, so simple in His holiness, that one single evil or impure thought deprives us of Him, of the sweet

[1] Galatians v. 24.
[2] Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus.
[3] Jude i. 10.
[4] St. Luke xxiii. 34.

and most sweet, of the pure and most pure peace and light of our souls. Hence it follows that the saints are all light; they are all one fragrance, like the light of the sun, like the purest air. Lord, grant this simple holiness to me also!

The Lord, before His incarnation, let mankind experience all the bitterness of sin, all their powerlessness to eradicate it; and when all longed for a Deliverer, then He appeared, the most wise, all-powerful Physician and Helper. When men hungered and thirsted after righteousness, as it grew weaker, then the everlasting righteousness came.

For all the many and various snares of the enemy, there is but one name—the Devil. My soul, be persuaded of this and do not be fainthearted, do not despond in the misfortunes occasioned by the enemy and in the storms wrought by the enemy.

"Thine is the power;"[1] that is, Thou holdest all and everything in Thy power and under Thine authority, even the spirits of evil. "Thine is the kingdom." Thou art King over all, even over the spirits of evil. "Thine is the strength." Thou maintainest all through Thy strength, and "Thine is the glory," for Thou hast created everything for Thy glory.

As God is everything good to us, so the Devil is every evil, every abomination of sin. A simple heart, taught by God, knows how to unite itself to God, and how to avoid every connection with the Devil.

It is sometimes necessary to ask a person who prays for himself, or for others, the following question in order to rouse his slumbering heart and conscience: "Are you in need of that for which you are apparently asking, and do you really desire to obtain it? Do you sincerely desire, for instance, amendment and holiness of life for yourself and others?"

There is only one God of my heart, my Lord and my God, and He is everything to me, as He is also everything to the whole world, visible and invisible, which was created by Him from nothing. Therefore, I ought not to cling to anything but to my God; I ought to part from everything that I have without regret, as from the dust which we trample under feet, and ought only to have in my heart love for God, and my brethren who are received in Christ into union with the Divine

[1] The Russian Orthodox Church Service-Book.

nature. "Ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."[1] "Now are we the sons of God."[2] Whilst malice is the child of the Devil, may it never, neither pride, nor self-exaltation, and envy, touch our heart, even for a single moment!

It is a remarkable phenomenon in nature that, if you put a plant into a large, wide pot or tub, it grows very much at the roots; they thicken, they give out many ramifications, but the tree itself does not grow much in height, and only yields few and small leaves and flowers. But if it is planted in a small pot, then the roots are small, but the plant itself grows rapidly in height and yields beautiful leaves and flowers (if it is the nature of the plant to produce flowers). Is it not the same with man? When he lives in full liberty, in abundance and prosperity, then he grows in body and does not grow in spirit, does not bring forth fruits—good works; whilst when he lives in straitness, in poverty, sickness, misfortune, and afflictions, in a word, when his animal nature is crushed, then he grows spiritually, bears flowers of virtue, ripens and brings forth rich fruits. This is why the path of those who love God is a narrow one.

We all, without distinction of our different stations in life, rich and poor, high and low, educated and uneducated, are one body, and must love one another, as we love ourselves. "We, being many, are . . . one body."[3] "Love one another,"[4] commanded the Lord. We must crucify, despise our self-loving, proud, scornful, evil, darkened, deadened, rebellious, passionate heart, which violently opposes our acting in accordance with these words in our everyday life; in our worldly relations with our neighbour we must also renounce our self-will, and follow the Will of God in everything.

Our heart, full of passions, loves enjoyment and tranquillity, cannot endure bitterness and afflictions, and does not like anyone to disturb us in any way; for instance, by a request to do something for him. But the Lord commanded us to renounce the sinful rest of the flesh, and to be the servants of all, and Himself showed us an example, for He knew no rest upon earth during His service for our salvation. The Apostles were also an example of this, especially the Apostle Paul.

Our heart often sleeps during prayer; the outer man prays, but not the inner one. We often only flatter with our tongue during prayer.

[1] Peter i. 4.
[2] 1 John iii. 2.
[3] 1 Corinthians x. 17.
[4] St. John xv. 17.

Having put on Christ by faith and by the Communion of the Holy Sacrament, I become firm and steadfast as a rock. Christ is the fulness of all blessings to me, and, above all, most sweet life, and the peace "which passeth all understanding."[1]

When the flesh flourishes, the soul fades; when the flesh has full liberty, the soul is straitened; when the flesh is satiated, the soul hungers; when the flesh is adorned the soul is deformed; when the flesh overflows with laughter, the soul is surrounded by misfortune; when the flesh is in the light, the soul is in darkness—in the darkness of hell.

Modern, false education estranges from the true Light "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,"[2] and does not approach It. But without Christ all education is vanity.

Our old man, with the old works of the Devil, is constantly present with us, and acts mortally within us. This is why we occupy ourselves in the pulpit with this old man and his works, in order that all who hear us may learn to know themselves and the enticement of the passions, and, with the help of God's grace, may slay the old man within them; while we do not occupy ourselves with the news of this world, as it does not concern us. Thus we teach all to know God, to love Him with the whole heart, and to love their neighbour as themselves. And as self-love is incompatible with love for God and our neighbour, we teach men, in accordance with the precepts of the Saviour, to renounce themselves, and to crucify the flesh, with its passions and lusts. This is an old discourse, but yet it may be a new one, according to how it is turned, whether the preacher directs it against the human passions and lusts of the present day, or speaks in general, without special indication, of the necessity of crucifying the old man.

Blasphemy against holiness, or thoughts of carnal impurity, proceed from the Devil. When this stink from the abyss of hell disturbs and suffocates you, only be convinced, only believe sincerely, that it is the work of the Devil, and this abomination will leave you. May the Lord enlighten and strengthen us!

The history of the choosing and the rejection of the Hebrews shows the truth, that God shall exalt and honour those who are faithful to Him, and shall abase and reject the

[1] Philippians iv. 7. [2] St. John i. 9.

ungrateful. It also shows the truth that He is faithful in His promises and threats.

He Who has adorned the heavens with stars, could He not still more beautifully adorn His mental Heaven, the most pure Virgin, His Mother? He Who has adorned the earth with various and many-coloured flowers, and poured fragrance upon it, could He not adorn His earthly Mother with all the various flowers of virtues, making Her fragrant with all spiritual perfumes? Truly He could. And our Lady has become "Heaven and the Temple of the Godhead, adorned with all beauties, and more fragrant than all earthly perfumes. O, if God in His mercy, through the prayers of His most pure Mother, would adorn me, disfigured by sin; if He would make me, the unclean, fragrant! For with God nothing shall be impossible.[1] "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."[2]

Adam became so proud that he wished to become God and died for his pride; the Son of God humbled Himself unto death, and gave life to the fallen. O abyss of humility! Adam and Eve lost themselves through gluttony, the Lord fasted and died for them, in order to give them life. They were disobedient, Christ fulfilled obedience.

"Having seen the wonderful birth of Christ, let us shun this vain world and set our minds upon godly things. God came down from heaven in order to raise us up to heaven,"[3] whilst the Devil and the flesh drag us down to earth. Christ calls and draws us to the life eternal, whilst the Devil allures us by the temporal life, and attaches us to temporal things, concealing the eternal in darkness, or making men disbelieve in eternal life. Observe his snares, and do not be allured by the earthly life.

Man, in his present state, is wholly permeated with pride, wickedness, unbelief, doubt, incredulity, disobedience, heedlessness, malice, fornication, envy, covetousness, avarice, slothfulness, sometimes cowardice, despondency, theft, falsehood, and blasphemy. What a great labour lies before every Christian man to cleanse himself from all the impurity and corruption of the passions!

The Devil generally enters into us through one single lying imagination, or through a single false thought and sinful desire of the flesh, and afterwards he works in us and disturbs us,

[1] St. Luke i. 37. [2] Isaiah i. 18.
[3] From the Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus.

so incomplex is he. Cannot, therefore, the Lord of all spirits enter into us through one single thought and through true and holy love, and abide with us, and be everything to us? And therefore pray undoubtingly; that is simply, in the simplicity of your heart, without a doubt: it ought to be as easy to pray as to think.

Leave all human injustices to the Lord, for God is the Judge, but as to yourself, be diligent in loving everybody with a pure heart, and remember that you yourself are a great sinner and in need of God's mercy. But in order to deserve God's mercy, we must forgive others in every way. So be it! So be it! The Lord is everything to all: He is the Judge as well as the generous Giver of gifts, and mercy and the cleansing from sins, and the light, the peace, the joy and the strength of the heart.

Grant, Lord, that I may ever love each of my neighbours as myself, and not be angry with them for any cause, and not serve the Devil in this way. Grant that I may crucify my self-love, pride, covetousness, incredulity, and other passions. Let mutual love be our name; grant that we may believe and trust that the Lord is everything to us all; that we may not be careful nor anxious for anything; that Thou, our God, may truly be the sole God of our heart and nothing besides Thee. Let there be union of love between us as there ought to be, and let everything that divides us from each other, and prevents us from loving one another, be despised by us, like the dust trampled under foot. So be it! So be it! If God has given us Himself, if He abides in us and we in Him, according to His own true words, then what will He not give me, what will He spare for me, of what will He deprive me, how can He forsake me? "The Lord is my shepherd: therefore can I lack nothing."[1] "Shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"[2] And therefore, my soul, be perfectly at rest and know nothing but love. "These things I command you, that ye love one another."[3]

[1] Psalm xxiii. 1. [2] Romans viii. 32. [3] St. John xv. 17.

Part II.

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."—St. John xvii. 3.

"MAY the living water of the Holy Ghost fill my heart, and may rivers of living water flow from my heart to the glory of God, and for the salvation of God's people."

To the Glory of the Holy Trinity. Amen.

Lord! I am—a miracle of Thy goodness, wisdom, and omnipotence, inasmuch as I was brought by Thee from non-existence into existence; inasmuch as I am preserved until now by Thee in this existence; inasmuch as by the mercy, bounties, and love to mankind of Thine Only begotten Son, I shall inherit eternal life, provided I am faithful unto Thee; inasmuch as by the mysterious act of Thine, offering Thyself through Thy Son as a sacrifice, I am restored from the terrible fall, I am redeemed from eternal destruction, I glorify Thy goodness, Thine infinite power, Thy wisdom! But complete the miracle of Thy goodness, omnipotence, and wisdom upon me, a miserable sinner, and by ways known to Thee, save me, Thine unworthy servant, and lead me into Thine eternal kingdom, make me worthy of the life that never grows old, of the day that has no evening.

My heart ought to cling to God alone. "It is good for me to hold me fast by God"; [1] but—what blindness and perversion! it clings to earthly delights: to food, drink, carnal pleasures; to money, to this dross, to dress, to this corruption, to perishable colours, to patterns, to fashions, that charm the eyes, to luxuriously furnished rooms, etc. How strange it is! I, a Christian, a heavenly man, am occupied with everything earthly, and care but little for heavenly things. I am transplanted in Christ into heaven, but meanwhile I cling with all my heart to earth, and apparently would never desire to be in heaven, but would prefer to always remain on earth, although earthly things, notwithstanding their delights, oppress and torment me; although I see that everything earthly is uncertain, corruptible, and soon passes away; although I know and feel that nothing earthly can satisfy my spirit, can appease and

[1] Psalm lxxiii. 28.

rejoice my heart, which is constantly disturbed and grieved by earthly vanity. How long, therefore, shall I, a heavenly man, remain earthly? How long shall I, the child of God, be flesh, notwithstanding that I was born in holy baptism, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"[1]? How long will it be before I turn wholly to God? Lord! draw my heart to Thee by Thy Holy Spirit. Lord! turn my heart away from earthly vanities. Lord! without Thee I can do nothing.

We love everything brilliant on earth: gold, silver, precious stones, crystal, bright clothing—why then do we not love the future glory to which the Lord calls us? Why do we not aspire to shine like the sun? "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."[2] It is because we have perverted the nature of our soul by sin, and have attached ourselves to earth instead of to heaven, to corruptible things instead of to incorruptible ones; because we love earthly, transitory, perishable, and seductive splendour. But why is there such a love for everything bright in us? Because our soul was created for heavenly light, and was originally all light, all radiance; thus light is inborn in it, the feeling and desire for light are inborn in it. Direct this aspiration to seeking for heavenly light!

When you see a beautiful girl or woman or a handsome youth, immediately lift up your thoughts to the supreme, most holy Beauty, the Author of every earthly and heavenly beauty, that is, to God; glorify Him for having created such beauty out of mere earth; marvel at the beauty of God's image in man, which shines forth even in our perverted state; imagine what our image will be when we shall shine forth in the kingdom of our Father, if we become worthy of it; picture to yourself what must be the beauty of God's saints, of the holy angels, of the Mother of God Herself, adorned with the Divine glory; imagine the unspeakable goodness of God's countenance, which we shall behold, and do not be allured by earthly beauty, by flesh and blood. Carnal desire is sweet, but it is sinful, corruptive, and repugnant to God. Do not attach yourself with your heart to any girlish or female beauty, but to the Lord God alone, Who has created every beauty for His own sake, and say: "It is good for me to hold me fast by God,"[3] to God alone, and not to fleeting carnal beauty.

The despondency that we fall into through failure in any

[1] St. John i. 13. [2] St. Matthew xiii. 43. [3] Psalm lxxiii. 28.

work, especially in priestly matters, which we do for others, and the sense of shame proceed from our bodiless enemy, who ever seeks, like a roaring lion, to devour us, and who forces us into every failure, into every sin. Therefore, in order to be unerring in such matters, we must previously prepare ourselves by intelligent study, combined with abstinence and prayer; we must strive after perfection in everything, and not give place to the Devil. If failure occurs, do not let us be overwhelmed with despondency, but, acknowledging before God our sin and infirmity, let us humble ourselves before Him, throwing aside our self-love, and without shame confess our sin, our carelessness, slothfulness, or weakness, and cast our sin into the abyss of God's mercy, asking for His grace and help for the good and successful accomplishment of our work in future.

In prayer and in every work of your life avoid suspiciousness, doubt, and diabolical imaginations. Let your spiritual eye be single, in order that the whole body of your prayer, of your works, and of your life may be light.

During general prayer let your whole heart be in God, and do not on any account let it cling for a single moment to anything earthly; have also an ardent love for human souls, love for the sake of God, and be zealous for their salvation; pray for them as for those who are in great misery, for it is said: "All we who are subjected to the enticements of the evil one are in misery."

When hungry, do not throw yourself upon food—else you will overload your heart and body. Eat slowly, without avidity, with reflection to the glory of God, remembering the God Who feeds us, and above all His incorruptible food, His Body and Blood, that out of love He has given Himself to us in food and drink, remembering also the holy word of the Gospel.

Everything that disturbs us, and as though undermines the heart in its foundation and oppresses it, proceeds from the Devil, for he himself is eternal disturbance and oppression. The Lord is the peace and rest of the heart. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[1] "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you."[2] How many passions there are, how much disturbance and oppression; how many attachments, how many sharp arrows

[1] St. Matthew xi. 28. [2] St. John xiv. 27.

penetrating the heart, and how much darkness! The greater part of a man's life is spent in spiritual darkness.

Should thoughts of self-praise, of self-satisfaction, occur to you, say: "I myself am nothing; all that is good in me is accomplished by the grace of God." "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"[1] "Without Me ye can do nothing."[2] Should the thought of despising any of your neighbours, or of your family occur to you, say: "The entire man is the beautiful work of God's hands; everything in him is very well ordered." For "it was very good."[3]

What is your obligation as a communicant of the Holy Mysteries? "You must seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God;"[4] and not think of earthly things, for "Christ came upon earth in order to raise us up to heaven."[5] "In My Father's house are many mansions. . . . . I go to prepare a place for you."[6] "Our conversation is in heaven."[7] "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."[8] "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."[9] "Suffer little children to come unto Me . . . . for of such is the kingdom of God."[10] Do you see what the final purpose is for which Christ came upon earth, for which He gives us His divine Mysteries—His Body and Blood? This purpose is—to give us the kingdom of heaven. Let us aspire to gain it.

Pride is of the demon; malice is of the same demon; envy of the same demon; the abomination of fornication is of the same demon; enforced blasphemy, of the same demon; enforced doubt in the truth, of the same demon; despondency, of the same demon; the passions are various, but the same Satan acts in all of them; the passions are various, but they are, all together—the barking of the same Satan, only in different tunes; and the man, when subjected to them, is one and the same spirit with Satan. When you are subjected to the malicious and furious violence of the passions, and to the harassments of the Devil, during the fulfilment of various works for God, accept these sufferings as sufferings for the name of Christ, and rejoice in your sufferings, thanking God; for the Devil is preparing for you, without knowing it himself, the most shining crowns from the Lord! Amen. We must absolutely resist the Devil.

[1] 1 Corinthians iv. 7. [2] St. John xv. 5. [3] Genesis i. 31.
[4] Colossians iii. 1, 2. [5] From the Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus.
[6] St. John xiv. 2. [7] Philippians iii. 20. [8] St. Matthew v. 3.
[9] St. Matthew v. 20. [10] St. Luke xviii. 16.

Do not be vexed with those who show pride, or malice, effeminacy, and impatience in their intercourse with you or others, but, remembering that you yourself are subject to the same and greater sins and passions, pray for them and be meek with them. "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens [if anybody has offended you, and it is hard for you, bear this], and so fulfil the law of Christ."[1]

Do you pay sufficient attention to the state of your soul? whether it is in good health, and, seeing that it lives, is its life vigorous? And, if its present temporal life is happy, then is its eternal life, its eternal happiness, ensured by anything — for instance, by faith — is there in your soul a lively faith in God, in the Saviour, in the Church,—by good works, meekness, humility, gentleness, love of truth and honesty, abstinence, chastity, mercy, patience, obedience, industry, and others? If the reverse is the case, then all your labour is in vain. The soul, perhaps, does many things worthy of wonder, but it will be itself lost. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"[2]

A day is the symbol of the transitoriness of earthly life: it begins with the morning, then comes the day itself, followed by the evening, and, with the coming of the night, the whole day has passed away. So, likewise, life passes away. First, childhood, like the early morning; then, adolescence and manhood, like the full day and noon; and then old-age, like evening, if God grants it; and afterwards inevitable death.

Wherever a man goes, he always comes back home afterwards. So it is with the Christian, whoever he may be, whether he is a person of distinction or a simple one, rich or poor, learned or ignorant; wherever he may be, whatever station he may occupy in society, whatever he does, he must remember that he is not at home, but on a voyage, on the way, and that he must return home—to his father, mother, to his elder brothers and sisters; and that this home is heaven, his father—God; his mother—the Most-pure Mother of the Lord; his elder brothers and sisters—the angels and saints of God; and he must also remember that all his earthly duties and works are artificial, whilst his real duties are the salvation of his soul, the fulfilment of Christ's commandments, the cleansing of his heart.

[1] Galatians vi. 1, 2. [2] St. Matthew xvi. 26.

How can we love God with all our heart, with all our soul and all our strength, and with all our thoughts? With all our heart means—undividedly, not dividing ourselves between the love of God and love of the world, or in general of creatures. If, for instance, you pray, pray with an undivided heart, not allowing your attention to be distracted by vain thoughts, by earthly attachments; be wholly in God, in His love, with all your soul—that is, do not only love Him with part of your soul, not only with your mind, without your heart and will sharing in this love—with all your strength, not with half your strength or slightly. When you have to fulfil any commandment, fulfil it most zealously, unto sweat and blood, unto laying down your life for it, if necessary, but not slothfully, indolently or unwillingly.

How varying is this world! Here is merriment, music—there are prayers, hymns, lamentations for the dead; here are riches, luxury, splendour—there naked poverty, need of everything, even of decent and sufficiently warm clothing, overcrowding, disgusting dirt and damp; here is blooming health, superfluity of strength—there maladies, decrepitude, exhaustion; here are enlightenment, much knowledge—there ignorance, darkness; or here worldly education is united with spiritual enlightenment and piety, and in this union there is beautiful and pleasant harmony and spiritual beauty, while there worldly education is accompanied with unbelief, immorality, spiritual deformity, want of harmony and dissonance, harrowing the soul; here is success in all undertakings—there failure; here everything is easily obtained (money, position in society, honours, distinctions), whilst there a man strives with all his might and obtains nothing, or only by enormous efforts obtains even a little. Who shall solve this apparent contradiction? God alone. We can only conjecture.

He who is insolent towards men is insolent towards God, as many of us are. Respect in man the grand, inestimable image of God and be forbearing towards the faults and errors of fallen man, so that God may be forbearing towards your own, because the enemy of God and of mankind, being unable to vent his malice upon God, endeavours to vent it upon his image—man, as well as all his impurities, his darkness, pride, envy, etc. Respect, therefore, man and save him; watch yourself also, do not become irritable nor malicious, do not envy, do not offend, do not lie, do not commit adultery, do not steal, and so on.

Our soul is simple as thought, and rapid as thought or lightning. In an instant it can be wounded by sin and become

attached to corruptible things; in an instant it can fall away from the love of God and its neighbour through a single unrighteous thought, through a single passionate desire, through a single malevolent thought, and, therefore, we must constantly watch our heart, lest it should incline to words or thoughts of evil, and must ever strive to preserve it in God's simplicity and purity, and in the love of God and its neighbour.

The best moments on earth are those during which we meditate upon heavenly things in general, when we recognise or defend the truth, that heavenly dweller and denizen. Only then do we truly live. Therefore, the essential interests of the soul require that we should oftener rise above the earth, upwards to heaven, where is our true life, our true country, which shall have no end.

Looking upon the many various diversions of men, upon their exclusive care for the flesh, one thinks: "Have these men a soul? And if they have, then why do they not care for it, why do they not think of its salvation?—for it is given up to innumerable sins which constitute its death, and eternal death. Are there indeed eternal torments and eternal bliss? And if these exist, then why do men strive so little, or do not strive at all, to escape eternal torment and to inherit eternal bliss?" This is what astonishes me. And, also, why do not men fear the terrible hour of death? For we cannot live on earth for ever. Some time our turn will come, and we shall be told: "Return ye, sons of men, unto the earth from which you were created." O, how heedless we are, how great is our pride, how manifold our passions, our attachments to the earth! Sinners, do you think that God has no means by which He can punish you? O, there are means, there are! There is the fiery gehenna, the lake of fire, the terrible Tartarus, at which even Satan himself trembles, the worm that never dies, and the gnashing of teeth. But why do I discourse of this only to you? I ought to say the same to myself, to myself also, for I am the greatest of the sinners, for whom the torments of hell were prepared, but from which Christ, in Whom is all my hope, has saved me. But you, my brethren, have you all faith in Christ, in His Gospel? Where is your evangelical life? Who of you reads the Gospel, even daily, that greatest gift of God, and law of life? "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."[1]

Both learned and unlearned young men seldom go to church,

[1] Romans iii. 12. Compare Psalm xiv. 3.

and in general do not attend to their spiritual education, looking upon it as unnecessary and giving themselves up to worldly vanity. Attention must be paid to this. It is the fruit of pride, of want of spiritual development. They consider attendance at church and Divine service as the business of the common people and women, forgetting that, in the temple, Angels officiate with trembling, together with men, and regard this as their highest bliss.

Does not coldness towards public worship, towards Divine service, proceed from the fact that some do not understand it, and that others, although they have studied the science of Divine service, have been taught it drily, without any examples, only according to the understanding? whilst Divine service, being the high contemplation of the mind, is at the same time, and pre-eminently, the peace, sweetness and blessedness of the heart.

A priest, as the physician of souls, ought himself to be free from spiritual infirmities (that is, from the passions), in order to be able to cure others; as a pastor, he ought to be pastured himself on the grassy pasture land of the Gospel and the writings of the Holy Fathers, in order to know where to pasture his sheep; he ought to be skilful in struggling against the mental wolves, in order to know how to drive them away from Christ's flock; he ought to be skilful and mighty in prayer and abstinence; he ought not to be bound by worldly desires and delights, especially by covetousness, self-love, pride, ambition. In short, he ought to be a light himself, in order to enlighten others; to be himself the spiritual salt, in order to preserve others from spiritual corruption; and ought himself to be free from the corruption of the passions. If the reverse is the case, every spiritually sick person may say: "Physician, heal thyself" [1] first, and then I will let you heal me. "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." [2]

The heart is refined, spiritual, and heavenly by nature—guard it; do not overburden it, do not make it earthly, be temperate to the utmost in food and drink, and in general in bodily pleasures. The heart is—the temple of God. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." [3]

Be a Christian in heart—that is, be always sincere in prayer, in your intercourse with your neighbour, ever believing,

[1] St. Luke iv. 23. [2] St. Matthew vii. 5. [3] 1 Corinthians iii. 17.

trusting, meek, gentle, wishing well to everybody, just, not covetous, compassionate, merciful, abstinent, chaste, patient, obedient, courageous.

O, how dearly our Lord Jesus Christ valued our soul and its salvation by coming down upon earth, by taking upon Himself our soul and body, by His awful sufferings, and by dying for us! And how do I value my soul and its eternal salvation? O, I do not know how to value it, and have not until now learned how to answer the love of my Saviour, having attached myself wholly to the earth, having given myself up wholly to slothfulness and various passions. How can the love of God, the kingdom of heaven, be in you when in your heart reigns earthly love—sensuality, cupidity, and pride? It is impossible, until you have "crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts;"[1] "for no man can serve two masters;"[2] and "whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."[3] "Love not," it is said, "the world, neither the things that are in the world. . . . For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father. . . . And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."[4]

Our Lord God is pleased with us for our importunate request for His mercies, seeing in our importunity our faith and love to Him; whilst we sinners are angry with the poor, who daily and importunately ask alms of us—even with poor children, whose confidence in men is especially great, and whose belief in the goodness of others is boundless, because they themselves are simple, good, and meek. Being covetous, sensual, and proud, we often look contemptuously upon them, cry out at them—the meek lambs—get out of temper, not wishing to understand that hunger, want of clothes, boots, urgent demand for the rent of their miserable lodgings, force them to beg importunately of us. Is it not they that cry unto the Lord against us in the words of the prophet David: "Our soul is filled with the scornful reproof of the wealthy, and with the despitefulness of the proud"?[5] And certainly, sooner or later, the voice of their complaint shall reach heaven. It has, perhaps, long ago reached the ears of the Lord God of Sabbaoth, and will move Him to wrath against us and to righteous vengeance.

[1] Galatians v. 24. [2] St. Matthew vi. 24. [3] James iv. 4.
[4] 1 John ii. 15-17. [5] Psalm cxxiii. 4.

Until now I have not become impoverished by being merciful to others, and shall not become impoverished to the last, for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day."[1] It is not said without reason: "He that giveth to the poor shall not lack." Indeed, up till now the Lord has only increased my temporal blessings, and has not taken them away. I praise the bountifulness of the Lord, His rich Providence.

Thou art the representative of faith and of the Church, O priest; thou art the representative of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; therefore, thou must be an example of meekness, purity, valour, firmness, patience, of elevation of spirit. Thou art doing God's work, and must not lose courage before anybody; thou must not flatter anyone, nor be servile, and must consider thy work as higher than all human affairs.

He who is accustomed to give account of his life at confession here will not fear to give an answer at the terrible judgment-seat of Christ. It is for this purpose that the mild tribunal of penitence was here instituted, in order that we, being cleansed and amended through penitence here below, may give an answer without shame at the terrible judgment-seat of Christ. This is the first motive for sincere confession, and, moreover, it must absolutely be made every year. The longer we remain without confessing, the worse it is for us, the more entangled we become in the bonds of sin, and therefore the more difficult it is to give an account. The second motive is tranquillity: the more sincere has been our confession, the more tranquil will the soul be afterwards. Sins are—secret serpents, gnawing at the heart of a man and all his being; they do not let him rest, they continually suck his heart; sins are—prickly thorns, constantly goring the soul; sins are—spiritual darkness. Those who repent must bring forth the fruits of repentance.

Consciousness, memory, imagination, feeling, and will are helps to penitence. As we sin with all the powers of our soul, so penitence must be from our whole soul. Penitence in words only, without the intention of amendment and without the feeling of contrition, may be called hypocritical. Should the consciousness of sins be obscured, it must be cleared up; should the feeling be smothered and dulled, it must be roused; should the will become blunt and too weak for amendment, it must be forced; "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."[2] Confession must be sincere, deep, and full.

Ah, my brethren! shall we not all soon vanish from the face

[1] Hebrews xiii. 8. [2] St. Matthew xi. 12.

of the earth, and be as though we had not existed? Where are, then, our works of love? Where is the fulfilment of the Creator's commandments? Where is the spirit of Christ in us? Where is gentleness, where is humility, where is love for souls, where is detachment from temporal things? Where is zeal for spiritual blessings? How vain and most foolish we are! We have distorted the image of our souls, distorted our life, perverted it, turned it upside down. Instead of pleasing Christ, we please the Devil.

This tranquil, beautiful heaven, studded with stars, will some day present the most terrible spectacle before the second coming of the Lord. O sinners, be taught daily by the spectacle of the heavens while there is yet time to learn. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven."[1]

There is, my brethren, a true, real life, and there is a false, imaginary life. To live in order to eat, drink, dress, walk; to enrich ourselves in general, to live for earthly pleasures or cares, as well as to spend time in intriguing and underhand dealings; to think ourselves competent judges of everything and everybody is—the imaginary life; whilst to live in order to please God and serve our neighbours, to pray for the salvation of their souls and to help them in the work of their salvation in every way, is to lead the true life. The first life is continual spiritual death, the second—the uninterrupted life of the spirit.

The Lord said of His Church: "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."[2] This is said of the pastors of the Church, or the Church hierarchy, and of all true believers, as well as of all the sacraments, all the dogmas and commandments of the Holy Orthodox Faith, and of all the offices of the sacraments; for instance, the Liturgy, Holy Orders, Matrimony, Baptism, Chrism, Holy Oil, which have been established unto all the ages, and have already been in existence unchanged during many centuries. See how firm is the Church, founded by the Lord! Remember these words of the Lord, and do not waver in the slightest degree when celebrating any of the sacraments. Be firm as adamant.

I love to pray in God's temple, especially within the holy altar, before the Holy Table or the Prothesis, for by God's grace I become wonderfully changed in the temple. During the prayer of repentance and devotion the thorns, the bonds of the passions, fall from my soul, and I feel so light; all the

[1] St. Matthew xxiv. 29. [2] St. Matthew xvi. 18.

spell, all the enticement of the passions vanish, and I seem to die to the world, and the world, with all its blessings, dies for me. I live in God and for God, for God alone. I am wholly penetrated by Him, and am one spirit with Him. I become like a child soothed on its mother's knee. Then my heart is full of most heavenly, sweet peace. My soul is enlightened by the light of heaven. At such times we see everything clearly; we look upon everything rightly; we feel friendship and love towards everyone, even towards our enemies, readily excusing and forgiving everyone. O, how blessed is the soul when it is with God! Truly the Church is earthly paradise.

What is most terrible to man? Death? Yes, death. None of us can imagine, without terror, how he will have to die and breathe his last sigh. And how parents grieve when their beloved children die, when they lie breathless before their eyes! But, brethren, do not fear, and do not grieve beyond measure. By His death Jesus Christ our Saviour has conquered our death, and by His resurrection He has laid the foundation for our resurrection, and every week, every Sunday, we solemnise in the risen Christ our common future resurrection from the dead, and begin beforehand the life eternal, to which our present temporal life is but a short, narrow, and most sorrowful way. For a true Christian death is merely like a sleep until the day of resurrection, or like birth into a new life. And thus in solemnising every week the resurrection of Christ and our own resurrection from the dead, let us learn to continually die to sin, and to rise with our souls from dead works, to enrich ourselves with virtues, and not sorrow inconsolably for the dead. Let us learn to meet death without dread, as the decree of the Heavenly Father, which, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, has lost its terror.

Sin is foolish and destructive. For instance, a drunkard, from the excessive use of spirituous liquors, becomes ill, and indulges in various dissipations and shameful acts, which he himself is ashamed to think of and remember afterwards. And yet he continues to give himself up to drink. A glutton, after excessive eating, feels a heaviness, his capabilities become obscured, his tongue is bound, and he himself sees that he has become like an animal or bestial in nature, because he often breathes malice and spite against those who live with him, or who daily ask alms of him. He is subjected to oppression and affliction; he is deprived of peace and tranquillity; he becomes incapable of meditating upon heavenly things, or of being a true Christian, of living for the highest purpose of existence.

And yet he continues to be greedy after dainties and eating. An adulterer sees that through adultery he defiles and dishonours his nature, his soul and body, subjects them to maladies, perverts the order of life established by the Creator, exposes himself to shame; and yet he continues to commit adultery. A miser sees that his riches are a burden to him, sees that they deprive him of his spiritual freedom and make him their slave; that they turn him away from God and the love of his neighbour, draw him away from the true life, and bring death into his soul, depriving him of spiritual and bodily rest; that they lay heavy anxieties upon him; but yet he continues to accumulate greater riches and to add to his load, until, exhausted by cares, he falls ill and dies, having lost his soul through the accumulation of riches. And so it is with every sin—pride, malice, envy, and others.

We must kill in ourselves earthly love, love (the passion) for earthly, carnal beauty, for pleasures, for gain, for our own flesh, for honour, and quicken in ourselves love for heaven, our true country: for the soul, the heavenly denizen: for virtue. We must hate everything that the flesh loves, and love that which it despises, which it fears (for instance: meditation upon death, upon judgment); we must also love poverty, the sick and suffering.

Let others mock at you, oppose you, when you are under the influence of any passion; do not be in the least offended with those who mock at or oppose you, for they do you good; crucify your self-love and acknowledge the wrong, the error of your heart. But have the deepest pity for those who mock at words and works of faith and piety, of righteousness; for those who oppose the good which you are doing, or which you wish to instil into others. God preserve you from getting exasperated with them, for they are deserving of pity and tears. Glory to Thee, Lord, my Saviour, for having delivered me at my prayer from the tyranny of the passions!

When you are in the temple, remember that you are in the living presence of the Lord God, that you stand before His face, before His eyes, in the living presence of the Mother of God, of the holy angels, and of the first-born of the Church—that is, our forefathers, the prophets, Apostles, hierarchs, martyrs, reverend Fathers, the righteous, and all the saints. Always have the remembrance and consciousness of this when you are in the temple, and stand with devotion, taking part willingly and with all your heart in the Divine service.

I am morally nothing without the Lord. I have really not one true thought or good feeling, and can do no good works; without Him I cannot drive away from me any sinful thought, any passionate feeling such as malice, envy, fornication, pride, etc. The Lord is the accomplishment of everything good that I think, feel, and do. O, how boundlessly wide is the Lord's grace acting in me! The Lord is everything to me, and so clearly, so constantly. Mine—is only my sinfulness; mine—are only mine infirmities. O, how we ought to love our Lord, Who was pleased to call us into existence from non-existence, to honour us by His image and likeness, to establish us in a paradise of delights, to subdue all the earth unto us, and Who —when we did not keep His commandments, but were allured by the enticement of the Devil, and immeasurably offended our Creator by our ingratitude, and assimilated unto ourselves all the qualities of the tempter (pride, malice, envy, ingratitude) and all his evil arts, which he taught us as his prisoners—did not reject us for ever, but deigned to redeem us from sin, from the curse and death into which we had fallen through sin, and Himself appeared upon earth, having taken our nature upon Him; He Himself became my Teacher, my Healer, my Worker of miracles, my Saviour; He Himself bore the punishment for us, died for us in order that we should not be eternally lost. He rose from the dead, in order to raise us too after death. He ascended into heaven, in order that we, too, should ascend, we who had fallen so low through sin; and He became everything to us—food, drink, light, purification, sanctification, health—and the power that protects, saves, preserves, and has mercy upon us.

I myself am nothing, but by the grace of the priesthood, by bestowing upon others the Divine Body and Blood, I become the second or third means of healing sicknesses. Through me the grace of the Spirit gives new life to infants and grown persons; administers in the sacrament of the Eucharist the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, uniting believers with the Godhead; through me it looses or binds the sins of men, opens or closes heaven, gives salutary counsels, rules, etc. O, how venerable is the office of priest! Do you see, brethren, how many benefits the Creator and Saviour pours upon you through priests?

It very often happens that the mist of the spirit of malice surrounds our heart, and does not allow us to speak peaceably with our neighbours, who have once or several times offended us, or expressed any ill-will towards us. We must pray fervently to the Lord, that He Himself would disperse this

mist of malice, and fill our heart with mercy and love, even towards our enemies, for they, in the blindness of the passions —of pride, envy, covetousness, malice—do not themselves know what they do, as the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ knew not what they did when they persecuted Him all His life and at last put Him to a shameful death. We must remember that the Christian religion consists in loving our enemies: "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?"[1]

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."[2] How are we to seek first the kingdom of God? In the following manner: let us suppose that you wish to walk, or drive, or else go in a boat somewhere on any worldly, temporal business; before doing so, first pray to the Lord that He may correct the ways of your heart, and then also your present bodily way, or that He may direct the way of your life in accordance with His commandments; desire this with all your heart, and often renew your prayer concerning this. The Lord, seeing your sincere desire and endeavour to walk in accordance with His commandments, will, by degrees, correct all your ways. Further, for instance, if you wish to get pure air into your room, or if you go for a walk in the fresh air, think of the pure and of the unclean heart. Many of us like to have pure air in the rooms (and this is an excellent habit), or are fond of walking in the fresh air, but they do not even think of the necessity of the purity of the spirit or heart (of, so to say, spiritual air, the breath of life); and, living in the fresh air, they allow themselves to indulge in impure thoughts, impure movements of the heart, and even impurity of language, and most impure carnal actions. Again, when seeking material light, remember the spiritual light which is indispensable for the soul, and without which it remains in the darkness of the passions, in the darkness of spiritual death. "I am come a light into the world," says the Lord, "that whosoever believeth on Me, should not abide in darkness."[3] If you see the fury and hear the howling of the tempest, or read of shipwrecks, think of the storm of human passions causing daily groans and disturbance in the hearts of men, wrecking the spiritual ship of the soul or the ship of human society; and pray fervently to the Lord that He may subdue the tempest of sins, as He once subdued the tempest at sea by His word, and that He may root out our passions from our hearts, and re-establish in them unceasing tranquillity. If you experience a feeling of hunger or thirst,

[1] St. Matthew v. 46. [2] St. Matthew vi. 33. [3] St. John xii. 46.

and wish to eat and drink, think of the hunger or thirst of the soul (it thirsts after righteousness, for justification, Christ, for sanctification), which, if you do not satisfy, your soul may die from hunger, crushed by the passions, weakened and exhausted; and in satisfying your bodily hunger, do not forget to appease, above all and before all, your spiritual hunger, by conversing with God, by heart-felt repentance for your sins, by reading the story and precepts of the Gospel, and especially by the communion of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. If you are fond of dressing elegantly, or when you put on your clothes, think of the incorruptible garment of righteousness, in which our souls should be arrayed, or of Jesus Christ Who is our spiritual raiment, as it is said: "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ."[1] A passion for dress often entirely thrusts out from the heart the very thought of the incorruptible raiment of the soul, and turns the whole life into vain care about elegance in dress. If you are a scholar, a student in any educational establishment, or an official in some ministry, an officer in any of the branches of the military service, or a technologist, a painter, a sculptor, a manufacturer, a mechanic—remember that the first science for each one of you is to be a true Christian, to believe sincerely in the Holy Trinity, to converse daily with God in prayer, to take part in the Divine service, to observe the rules and regulations of the Church, and to bear in your heart, before your work, during your work, and after your work, the name of Jesus, for He is our light, our strength, our holiness, and our help.

It is a wonderful thing that, however much we trouble about our health, however much care we take of ourselves, whatever wholesome and pleasant food we eat, whatever wholesome drinks we drink, however much we walk in the fresh air, still, notwithstanding all this, in the end we are subjected to maladies and corruption; whilst the saints, who despised their flesh, and mortified it by continual abstinence and fasting, by lying on the bare earth, by watchfulness, labours, unceasing prayer, have made both their souls and bodies immortal. Our well-fed bodies decay and emit an offensive odour after death, whilst theirs remained fragrant and flourishing in life as well as after death. It is a wonderful thing: we, by building up, destroy our body; whilst they, by destroying, built up theirs; they, by only caring for the fragrance of their souls before God, obtained the fragrance of their bodies also. Brethren! understand the problem, the purpose of your life.

[1] Galatians iii. 27.

We must mortify our body with its many passions, or our carnal passions, through abstinence, labour, prayer, and not animate it and its passions through dainties, satiety, and slothfulness.

It is well in every respect to give to the poor, besides obtaining mercy on the terrible day of judgment. Even here, while on earth, those who give alms often obtain great mercies from their neighbours, and that which others only obtain for large sums of money is given to them freely. Indeed, will not the Lover of mankind, the most-righteous and the most-bountiful heavenly Father, Whose children are compassionated by the merciful, reward them here also, in order to encourage them to still greater works of mercy, or to the continuance of their previous works of mercy, as well as to the amendment of the unmerciful, who mock at the merciful? He will reward them both worthily and righteously.

How many trifling and incessant pretexts the hater of mankind offers us for hating our neighbour, so that we are almost constantly angry with others, almost constantly bearing malice against others, and living in accordance with his infernal all-destructive will. But do not let us chase his phantoms; let us put aside all enmity, and love everyone, for love is of God.

Lord, Thou continually conquerest hell in me, in accordance with my prayer; and if I am not yet in hell, it is through Thy mercy, Conqueror of hell, my Lord! Glory to Thee, our Benefactor, our Saviour! How would it have been with us without Thee? We should truly have been like the beasts, and should have exterminated each other. As it is with separate individuals, so it is also with nations. If separate individuals and nations lived in accordance with Thy Gospel, then there would not be any enmity, dissension, wars. When shall we fully acknowledge the necessity for our temporal and eternal good—to live in accordance with the Gospel? But now how few there are who even read the Gospel!

Lord! I confess to Thee that neither in the country nor in the forest are to be found life, and health, and vigour of the spiritual and material powers, but with Thee in the temple, and, above all, during the Liturgy and in Thy Holy Life-giving Mysteries! O, greatest blessedness of the Holy Mysteries! O, Life-giving Mysteries! O, Divine Mysteries, that are love unspeakable! O, Divine Mysteries, that are the Lord God's constant and wonderful Providence for saving and sanctifying

us! O, Divine Mysteries, that are the prefiguration of eternal life!

Our Lady, Most-holy Mother of God! I prayed to Thee, before the Liturgy, that Thou wouldst grant me grace to celebrate it with much power, to the glory of God, for the salvation of the world and mine own! Thou hast ordered all things well. I thank Thee, all-gracious Helper, Thou Who hearest us speedily, Thou Who dost not let our trust in Thee be shamed!

How many benefits has my faith in Christ brought me until now! Without speaking of innumerable other benefits, I will mention the following ones:—How many disturbances of the soul and passions it has driven away and appeased in me! how many evil inclinations of the heart it has corrected! how many times I was cleansed from my sins and my soul saved from spiritual death! And how near is our Lord unto him who believes! He is like the air, like the breath of our mouth, like the breathing of our heart, of our soul.

Lord, I thank Thee from all my heart for the blessed moving of Thy Holy Ghost during Divine service, both public and private, for the cleansing from sins, for peace, for devotion and tears, for fatherly consolation, for boldness, for power.

As a priest, pray above all for the cleansing from sins, for the enlightenment and renewal of God's people, and for your own renewal; for although you often drink the Blood of the New Testament and eat the life-giving Flesh of the Lamb of God, which can speedily regenerate and renew you, nevertheless, owing to your negligence, you are not yet regenerate nor renewed, being given up in the depths of your heart to the same passions that were in you before. Offer, then, unto God ardent prayer for your own renewal and that of His people. This is the most pleasing sacrifice to God. Offer your prayer with faith, firm trust, and love unfeigned: for to Him Who came to make a new garment out of the old one, and to pour new wine into old bottles, prayer for renewal is like fragrant incense, and concurs with the Lord's purpose of the regeneration of the human race, decayed by sin.

Unmurmuring obedience is very profitable to the soul; this we see from the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who for His obedience was exalted, according to His human nature, above all dominations, principalities, and authorities, as

well as from the examples of all God's saints, who for their obedience to the Son of God and His Gospel were deemed worthy of incorruptible heavenly crowns and eternal life with God and His holy angels. Besides this, obedience is also abundantly profitable to the body: for what the slothful lose is acquired by the laborious and zealous, who are obedient. Therefore obedience is profitable both to the soul and to the body; and even if it is not always profitable to the body, then it is absolutely so to the soul. And thus let everyone be obedient in that which is good, but not in evil.

To be humble means to consider ourselves deserving, for our sins, of every humiliation, injury, persecution, and even blows; and to be meek means to patiently endure injustice, abuse, etc., and to pray for our enemies.

The poignant sorrow with which you unintentionally pierce another's heart shall return to your own heart according to the strict law of requital: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."[1] If you do not desire sorrow for yourself, do not occasion it to others.

If people labour so long for worldly vanity, and often make us wait in vain for them to finish, then should not we, God's servants, labour for the Lord God slowly, pausing with understanding, with feeling, with great reverence and zeal, reading the prayers distinctly, separately? Better let people wait for us than we for them. Lord, let it be thus at every celebration of Divine service, of the Sacraments. Give all this Thyself: for without Thee we can do nothing.[2]

A true Christian never forgets that in this world he is the prisoner of the Devil, and he continually sighs for the spiritual freedom given by the Son of God to all those who believe in Him and strive to free themselves from the bondage of sins; a true Christian lives watchfully, using all earthly things in moderation; he does not spend his time in idle talk or idle amusements; he is not extortionate, does not envy, prays constantly, and repents of his sins.

People say that it is not a matter of importance if you eat meat during Lent, for Lent does not consist in food; that it is not a matter of importance if you wear costly, fine clothes, frequent theatres, evening parties, masquerades; if you provide yourself with expensive plate, china, furniture, costly equipages, spirited horses; if you amass and hoard

[1] St. Matthew vii. 2. [2] St. John xv. 5.

money, etc. But what is it that turns away our heart from God, the Source of life; through what do we lose eternal life? Is it not through gluttony, through expensive dress, like the rich man in the Gospel? Is it not through theatres and masquerades? What is it that makes us hard-hearted to the poor, and even to our own relatives? Is it not our attachment to carnal pleasures in general, to our belly, to dress, plate, furniture, carriages, money, etc.? Can a man serve God and mammon;[1] be a friend of God and a friend of the world, work for Christ and for the Devil? It is impossible. Through what did Adam and Eve lose Paradise, through what did they fall into sin and death? Was it not through food alone? Let us consider well what makes us careless about the salvation of our soul, which cost the Son of God so dear; what makes us add one sin to another; what makes us fall continually into opposition against God, into a life of vanity. Is it not attachment to earthly things, and especially to earthly delights? What makes our heart gross? What makes us become flesh, and not spirit, perverting our moral nature? Is it not attachment to food and drink and other earthly goods? How after this can it be said that to eat meat during Lent is unimportant? To say so is nothing but pride, sophism, disobedience, want of submission to God, and estrangement from Him.

From what deep sores, from what mortal wounds, from what deathly breathing of sin, did the heavenly Physician, our Lord Jesus Christ, come to save us? Who can fully understand this? Nobody. Only in part, from our own experience, some of us see the depths of the abyss into which we have fallen through sin—all our powerlessness for good, all the power and abyss of the evil or sin nestling in our hearts. But even to see this is granted unto us by the grace of God, enlightening our darkened hearts. A man does not see this by his natural understanding, and therefore he cannot see and feel the necessity of amendment, and have strength for such amendment and renewal.

I thank the Lord, Who is mighty in His mercy and merciful in His might, for speedy and great forgiveness, for the healing of deep, spiritual wounds caused by sin. What long, continued prayer at home could not do was accomplished by only touching the life-giving, glorious, and terrible altar of God in the Temple of the holy and glorious leaders of the Apostles—Peter and Paul; the wounds of the heart, the disturbance, affliction, and oppression suddenly vanished, as if a

[1] St. Matthew vi. 24.

great mountain had fallen from my heart, and I was at peace; my heart expanded and grew light and daring. Wonderful are Thy works, Lord! Wonderful art Thou Thyself, sitting on the throne of Thy glory in Christian temples. Lord, most righteous Judge, most merciful and Almighty Saviour! glory to Thine invincible goodness, glory to Thine immeasurable power, King of all ages.

Brethren! amongst the beings created by God, there are the temporal, transitory ones, such as all unintelligent, animate and inanimate creatures, organic and inorganic, as well as the world itself, which will pass away; "for the fashion of this world passeth away."[1] And there are eternal beings, which are not transitory, such as the angels and the souls of men, the demons themselves with Satan. For man, the earthly life, life in the body, serves only as a preparation for eternal life, which will begin after the death of the body. Therefore we must avail ourselves without delay of the present life as a preparation for the other life; and as we chiefly work during week-days for the earthly life, we must work on Sundays and other holidays wholly for the Lord God, devoting them to attendance at Divine service, to reading the Word of God, to pious meditation, to edifying conversations, good works, and especially to works of mercy. Those sin grievously who neglect the matter of their spiritual education for eternal life in the world above. How can we forget our final destination? How is it possible to be so ungrateful to the Creator, Who created us after His own image and likeness, incorruptible, and for union with Himself; Who redeemed us by His cross, and opened to us the gates of the kingdom of heaven? How can many of us become "like the beasts that perish"?[2] "Let us lift up our hearts!"[3]

The body, being only the temporal garment of the soul, is perishable, and does not constitute the true life of the man. The true life is the spiritual life. If you rend, if you destroy the man's garment, still he himself remains alive; so also after the slaying, after the death, the corruption of the body, the soul remains alive. Let us then chiefly care for the soul, for its salvation!

O, holy temple, how good, how sweet it is to pray in thee! For where can there be ardent prayer if not within thy walls, before the throne of God, and before the face of Him Who sitteth upon it? Truly the soul melts from prayerful

[1] 1 Corinthians vii. 31. [2] Psalm xlix. 13, 21. [3] Exclamation at the Liturgy.

emotion, and tears flow down the cheeks like water. It is sweet to pray for all.

I marvel at the greatness and life-giving properties of the Holy Sacrament. An old woman who was spitting blood, and who had lost all strength, being unable to eat anything, after the Communion of the Holy Sacrament, which I administered to her, began to recover on the same day from her illness. A young girl who was almost dying, after the Communion of the Holy Sacrament began to recover on the same day from her illness; began to eat, drink, and speak; whilst before this she was almost in a state of unconsciousness, violently tossed about, and could neither eat nor drink anything. Glory to Thy life-giving and terrible Mysteries, O Lord!

Be true to God always and in everything. If you say the prayer "Our Father . . ." pronounce each word sincerely, with reverence, fixing your mind and heart upon God alone, not paying attention to anything or anybody around you. If you say any other prayer, say it also with all your soul, not with your heart divided, not paying undue attention to anything or anybody. The enemy of our salvation especially strives to draw our heart and mind away from God when we are about to serve Him, and endeavours to adulterously attach our heart to something irrelevant. Be always, every moment, with God, especially when you pray to Him. At this time be especially true and constant to Him. If you are inconstant, you will fall away from life, and will cast yourself into sorrow and straitness.

Do not hasten to eat and drink, but rather hasten to perform God's service; and when performing God's service, do not think of food and drink. Think well before Whom you stand, with Whom you are conversing, to Whom you are singing praises; be wholly in God, belong wholly to Him alone, pray with all your heart, sing with all your heart, serve for your neighbour as you would serve for yourself, gladly, heartily, not with a divided heart and thoughts. Lord! help us; for without Thee we can do nothing.[1]

When the heart is pure, then the whole man is pure; when the heart is unclean, the whole man is unclean: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies . . ."[2] But the saints all acquired pure hearts by fasting, vigilance, prayer, pious meditation, by reading the Word of God, martyrdom, labour, and

[1] St. John xv. 5. [2] St. Matthew xv. 19.

sweat; and the Holy Ghost abode in them, cleansed them from every impurity, and sanctified them by eternal sanctification. Strive also, above all, for the cleansing of your heart. "Make me a clean heart, O God."[1]

Do not value God's Sacraments at the price of gold and silver. That which you have freely received, be also ready to freely give. Leave the reward for your labour to the free-will of those who receive the Sacraments, and labour for those who give, or can only afford to give you, the smallest remuneration for your spiritual labour, as willingly as for those who offer you a large remuneration. During God's work do not think of silver; do not offend the Holy Ghost, and do not sell God's gifts, lest your silver be the cause of your own destruction. Ah, indeed some really do sell, and others buy, or think of buying, the gifts of the Holy Ghost for silver, like Simon the sorcerer.

Food and drink must only be used for strengthening our powers, and not as dainties, and we must not eat when nature does not require it. Many of us (and I myself the first), if we do not repent and correct ourselves, will be condemned for having eaten and drunk unseasonably, and thus for having lived, having understanding, like the brutes that have no understanding, and for having darkened our foolish hearts. You have amused yourselves with food and drink, and have often eaten and drunk when there was no need for you to eat and drink: "Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger."[2] "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter."[3]

You must pay most strict and active attention to this your daily action of eating and drinking, for from food and drink, from their quality and quantity, your spiritual, social, and family activity very greatly depends: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness."[4] Tea and coffee also pertain to drunkenness if indulged in unseasonably and to excess. O, woe unto us who are full now, and frequently look neglectfully upon God's gifts.

Through our flesh, and in general through our materiality, the Devil acts injuriously upon us. Thus, through wine, tea, coffee, through dainties, through money, dress, etc., he inflames our passions. Therefore we must guard against drinking much wine, tea, or coffee, and against eating dainties, especially without

[1] Psalm li. 10.
[2] St. Luke vi. 25.
[3] James v. 5.
[4] St. Luke xxi. 34.

other substantial, solid, and wholesome food. These dainties must only be used after everything, and in the most moderate quantity.

"Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."[1] It is he who so greatly distracts our thoughts in the temple during Divine service and at home during prayer; it is he who draws away our thoughts from God, from our souls and the souls of others, from heavenly and eternal things; it is he who occupies us with earthly trifles or with earthly vanity, with earthly nothingness, with earthly allurements, with food, drink, dress, houses, etc. We must pray for each other, that our faith should not fail, as the Saviour prayed for Peter.

By feeding largely, one becomes a carnal man, having no spirit, or soulless flesh; while by fasting, one attracts the Holy Ghost and becomes spiritual. When cotton is not wetted with water it is light, and if in a small quantity flies up in the air; but if it is wetted, it becomes heavy and at once falls to the ground. It is the same with the soul. O, how important it is to preserve it by fasting!

Is unwilling outward prayer profitable? No, it is repugnant to God. The same applies to study. Unwilling, literal study is not profitable. As the man who prays unwillingly only runs over the words, often without understanding their power, without feeling them, and his heart is not enlightened, not warmed, not vivified by them, so it is also with the unwilling pupil. It is necessary, when teaching, to accustom the pupils to study willingly, and to teach them to think about what they say.

By what name are you called according to the faith? By the name of Christian. What does it mean? It means that I am a member of the body of Christ, which is the Church of Christ, that I am a servant of Christ. To what does the name of Christian oblige you? It obliges me to always have Christ in my thoughts and heart, always to have His spirit, throughout all my life, imitating His life, fulfilling His holy commandments, and to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."[2]

What is holiness? Freedom from every sin and the fulness of every virtue. This freedom from sin and this virtuous life are only attained by a few zealous persons, and that not suddenly, but gradually, by prolonged and manifold sorrows, sicknesses, and labours, by fasting, vigilance, prayer, and that not by their

[1] St. Luke xxii. 31. [2] Colossians iii. 1, 2.

own strength, but by the grace of Christ. Only Our Lady, the Mother of God, was sanctified from Her early childhood, from Her mother's womb, and afterwards the Lord sanctified Her in the Holy of Holies with the most perfect sanctification through Her unceasing prayer, the reading of the Word of God and meditations upon it, through the teaching of the pure, heavenly and bodiless powers, and especially through Her own inward illumination. Holiness corresponds in nature to the light of the sun and to the whiteness of snow, whilst sin to darkness, want of light, and filth or rust.

When you look upon the icon of the Mother of God, with Her Eternal Infant, marvel how most truly the Godhead was united with human nature, glorify the goodness and omnipotence of God, and, recognising your own dignity as man, live worthily of the high calling to which you are called in Christ —that is, the calling of a child of God and an heir to eternal bliss.

Why does the Lord give to man the prolongation of his days upon the earth? In order that a man should have time to repent and to cleanse himself from his sins and passions, and that truth and love should entirely penetrate his heart, by means of the teaching of his feelings in relation to good and evil.

What is the human soul? It is the one same soul or the one same breath of God, which God breathed into Adam, and which until now is diffused from Adam upon the entire human race. Therefore all men are as though one man, or one great tree of mankind. From this comes the most natural commandment, founded upon the unity of our nature: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God [your Prototype, your Father] with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. Thou shalt love thy neighbour [for who can be nearer to me than the man like unto me, of the same blood as me?] as thyself."[1] To fulfil these two commandments is a natural necessity.

Receive everyone who comes to you, especially with a spiritual purpose, with a kind and cheerful aspect, although he or she may be a beggar, and humble yourself inwardly before everybody, counting yourself lower than he or she, for you are placed by Christ Himself to be the servant of all, and all are His members, although like you they bear the wounds of sin.

[1] St. Mark xii. 30, 31.

We must not doubt in the truth of the Gospel and of the Church-readings. Everything that is in the Gospel and in the Church is the breathing of the Spirit of truth, "the silver, which from the earth is tried, and purified seven times in the fire,"[1] life, peace and spiritual sweetness. Woe unto him who doubts: the lying spirit shall darken, oppress, and plunge him into despondency and affliction. This is from experience.

It is pleasing to the Lord, as to a most loving Father, when we pray for others—His children; and as parents, at the request of their good and well-principled children, forgive their wicked, capricious, and evil-natured ones, so also the heavenly Father, at the prayer of those "that are His,"[2] or at the prayer for the people of His priests, invested with His grace, has mercy even upon the unworthy, as He had mercy upon and forgave the rebellious and murmuring Hebrew people in the desert at Moses' prayer. But what an ardent prayer that was!

To the glory of the most holy name of our Master the Lord Jesus Christ and that of Our Lady, the Mother of God, I have experienced a thousand times in my heart, that, after the Communion of the Holy Sacrament or after fervent prayer at home —ordinary prayer or prayer in consequence of some sin, passion, and sorrow and straitness—the Lord, at the prayers of Our Lady, or Our Lady Herself, by the Lord's grace bestowed upon me, as though it were a new spiritual nature, pure, good, great, bright, wise, beneficent, instead of impure, despondent, languid, faint-hearted, dark, dull, and evil. Many times was I thus changed, with a marvellous great change, to mine own wonder and often to that of others. Glory to Thy power, Lord! Glory to Thy mercy, Lord! Glory to Thy bounties, Lord, which Thou hast manifested upon me a sinner!

Our life is love—yes, love. And where there is love, there is God; and where God is, there is every good. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."[3] And therefore joyfully feed and delight all, joyfully gratify all and trust in the heavenly Father for everything, in the Father of bounties, and the God of every consolation. Offer that which is dear to you as a sacrifice of love for your neighbour. Bring your Isaac, your heart, with its many passions, as a sacrifice to God, stab it of your own free will, crucify the flesh with its passions and lusts. As you have received everything from God, be ready to give back everything to God, so that, having been faithful in small things you may afterwards be made ruler over many things. "Thou hast been

[1] Psalm xii. 7. [2] 2 Timothy ii. 19. [3] St. Matthew vi. 33.

faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."[1] Look upon all passions as upon illusions, as I have found out a thousand times. Amen.

O, how wise ought the Christian to be during his life! He should be like the many-eyed cherubim—all eyes, all intellect, and incessant reflection, excepting in cases where absolute unreflecting faith is required.

Christian! remember and always bear in your thoughts and heart the great words of the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father Which art in heaven [remember, who is our Father?—God is our Father, our love; who are we? we are the children of God, and brothers amongst ourselves; in what love ought the children of such a Father to live amongst themselves? "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham"; [2] what works, then, ought we to do?] Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. Give us this day our daily bread [*our* bread, common to all and not for oneself alone: self-love must be banished from the hearts of God's children; we are one]. And forgive us our trespasses [you wish that God should forgive your trespasses, therefore look upon it as customary to forgive the sins of those who trespass against you, knowing that love is long-suffering and compassionate]. Lead us not into temptation [and you, yourself, must not give way to temptation: "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; and He that keepeth thee will not sleep. The Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand."[3]], but deliver us from evil [do not willingly give yourself up to evil and the Lord will not give you up to it]: for Thine is the kingdom [acknowledge the one King, God, and serve Him alone], the power [trust in His almighty power] and the glory [be zealous for His glory with all your might and during all your life], for ever [He is the eternal King, whilst Satan's kingdom shall soon pass away, being rapacious and false]. Amen." This is all true. Remember this prayer above all, and repeat it oftener in your mind, thinking over the meaning of each word, of each expression, and each petition in it.

Brothers and sisters! you were born again (after you were born of your parents) by water and the Spirit, you then became the children of God—say, do you live worthily of this high calling? Do you live as the children of God ought to live? Is it evident from your behaviour and actions that your "conversation is in heaven"?[4] Is it evident that you await your Lord again from heaven, as He promised us in His holy Word? Do you

[1] St. Matthew xxv. 23.
[2] St. John viii. 39.
[3] Psalm cxxi. 3, 5.
[4] Philippians iii. 20.

despise earthly things, and do you aspire with your whole heart after heavenly things? Do you not love this adulterous and sinful world? "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."[1] "The friendship of the world is enmity with God."[2] "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father."[3] This world has crucified and crucifies until now the Son of God, brothers and sisters! Watch over yourselves, do you live in accordance with the Gospel? Do you not live contrarily to it? Read oftener the first chapters of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

Save us, Thy race, Our Lady! Save us, we who are of one blood with Thee! Save us, Mother of Life and Mother of us all, although we are not worthy to call Thee our Mother! Cleanse, sanctify, strengthen and save us through Thy prayers!

For what purpose do I require property? In order to have means of subsistence for myself, my family and my relatives, and in order to help the poor, and not for the purpose of hoarding it. Measure bountifully, so that God may measure bountifully to you in accordance with your gift. Besides, all our property or all our means of existence are God's and not ours, and God is the Master of life. He cares for the support of our life, through ourselves or through others, or directly. "Let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life to Christ our God."[4] We say we must live, and our life is God, therefore God gives and will give all our means of existence.

In many worldly magazines and newspapers, the number of which has so greatly increased, there breathes an earthly spirit, frequently impious, whilst the Christian, in his hope, is a citizen not only of the earth, but also of heaven, and, therefore, he ought also to meditate upon heavenly things. The heathen writings of antiquity were, it would seem, often better and purer (Cicero, for instance), higher in their foundation and motive, than some writings of Christian peoples. The Personal Word of the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, is continually and greatly offended by Christian people, who are gifted with speech, and ought to be Godlike, both in their speech and writings, whilst now their words are often wasted in vain and even to tempt the Christian, who is turned aside by worldly writings from reading the Word of God and the writings of the Holy Fathers. The editors and publishers of worldly magazines and newspapers ensnare and entice the flock of Christ by the increase of flattering

[1] 1 John ii. 15. [2] St. James iv. 4. [3] 1 John ii. 16.
[4] From the Litany of the Orthodox Church.

words. O Word of God! What answer shall we give at Thy terrible Judgment?

Where do we now find in houses the reading of the divinely-inspired Psalter, which instils such great faith in God, such strong trust in God in misfortunes, sicknesses and sorrows, and such ardent love for God? Where is the reading of the divinely-inspired Psalms, which was the favourite reading of our forefathers, not only of the common people, but also of nobles and princes? Such reading is not to be found nowadays; and owing to this in many persons there is no faith, no trust in God, and no love for God and their neighbour, but unbelief, despair, and hatred. There is no ardent prayer, no purity of morals, no spirit of contrition for sins and of devotion, no righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The greater number of Christians are penetrated by the spirit of the world, by the spirit of magazines, newspapers, and in general of worldly writers, who themselves, in their turn, are penetrated by a heathen and not a Christian spirit, by the spirit of the denial of the Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by the spirit of self-exaltation, of the exaltation of their own proud and presumptuous intellect, and by the spirit of worldly vanity.

Everything that the Church puts into our mouths and hearing is truth, the breathing or teaching of the Holy Ghost. Reverence every thought, every word of the Church. Remember that the domain of thought and word belongs to God as well as the whole visible and invisible world. You have nothing of your own, not even any thought or word. Everything is our Father's, everything is God's. Mingle with the common order of things, as gold melts into various forms, or as nature forms one harmonious whole. Do not lead a self-loving, separate life.

The breaking up of the ice in the seas and rivers is an image of the dissolution of our soul from the body. When the waters are freed from ice they come face to face with the air, which begins to move them, and with the sun, which begins to bathe in them; so likewise pure souls, being freed from their bodies, come face to face with Christ, are refreshed by Him, and are made resplendent by Him. The waters, while they are covered with ice, are as though imprisoned in chains, have no immediate contact with the air and the light of the sun; so likewise our souls, while they live in their bodily covering, have no immediate communication with God and His saints, but only by means of their covering in part, indirectly, and

only when this bodily covering falls off shall we see our Lord face to face, as the waters, when they are freed from the ice, are directly exposed to the sun, and come into direct contact with the air.

Our heart is incomplex, single, and therefore cannot "serve two masters: God and mammon"[1]—that is, riches. This means that it is impossible to serve God truly and at the same time to be attached to earthly things, for all such things relate to mammon. Besides, it is unworthy of a man to serve riches, for they are earth and dust. All earthly things, if our heart attaches itself to them, make it gross and earthly, turn us away from God, from the Mother of God, and all the saints, from everything spiritual, heavenly, and eternal, and from love for our neighbour, and bind us to that which is earthly, perishable, and temporal. To complete that which has been said, it must be added that the spirit of attachment to earthly things, of sparing and grudging earthly things, is the spirit of the Devil, and the Devil himself dwells in the man through his attachment to earthly things. He often enters into our heart as an insolent conqueror, through some momentary attachment to earthly things, not immediately renounced, darkening, crushing, and deadening our soul, and making it incapable of any work for God, infecting it with pride, blasphemy, murmuring, contempt for holy things and its neighbour, opposition, despondency, despair, and malice.

It was for our sakes that the Lord was incarnate, suffered, was crucified, died, and rose from the dead. It was for our sakes also that He adorned His Mother, the Most Pure Virgin Mary, with all virtues, and endued Her with all Divine powers, so that She, the most merciful and the most perfect, should be, after Himself, everything to us. And therefore let not God's grace, with which Our Lady is filled, be fruitless for us. Let us all come with boldness and trust to the Virgin's wonderful, ever-helpful, and most pure protection. If sins trouble us, let us pray to Her, that She may cleanse us with the hyssop of Her prayers from every impurity of the flesh and of the spirit.

From what do blasphemy and contempt of the spiritual Word proceed? From the pride of our heart; from the presumption and satiety of our intellect.

You constantly notice that God does not tolerate the slightest momentary impurity in you, and that peace and God

[1] St. Matthew vi. 24.

Himself leave you immediately after the admittance of any impure thought into your heart. And you become the abode of the Devil if you do not immediately renounce the sin. So that at every sinful thought, and still more at every sinful word and deed, we must say, "This is the Devil." Whilst at every holy and good thought, word, and deed, we should say, "This is God"; or, "This comes from God." Imagine, therefore, now what a resplendently-adorned, pure, and immovable Palace of the Almighty must have been the most-holy soul and the most-pure body of the Mother of God, in Whose womb God the Word came to dwell, and abode in Her by His Godhead with His most pure Soul and Body! Imagine what eternal, infinite, unchangeable holiness She is! Imagine of what reverence and glorification She is worthy! Imagine what we are: "A reed shaken with [the Devil's] wind."[1] The Devil breathes his blasphemy into our hearts, and we are immediately shaken with it. We are disturbed, depressed, when we ought to despise all his blasphemies, or not pay any attention to them, looking upon them as an illusion.

As in God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are undivided, so also in prayer and in our life the thought, the word, and the deed ought to be undivided. If you ask anything of God, believe that it will be done in accordance with your request, as God pleases. If you read the Word of God, believe that everything that is spoken of in it was, is, and shall be; or was done, is being done, and shall be done. Believe thus, speak thus, read thus, and pray thus. Great is the Word; great is the thinking, speaking, and acting soul, the image and likeness of the Almighty Trinity. Man, know yourself! Know what you are, and conduct yourself in accordance with your dignity.

Merciful Lady, ever manifest and show Thy power upon me, and upon Thy people who are God-fearing and virtuous, by delivering us, in accordance with our prayer, from impure, crafty, and blasphemous thoughts, from all our sins and passions, and from the snares of the Devil, for Thou art the merciful Mother of God.

Pray to Our Lady the Mother of God, to the angels, and to all the saints, as you would pray to the Holy Ghost Himself; or rather, as you would pray to the Holy Trinity, Who sanctifies them and rests in them. "That they may be

[1] St. Matthew xi. 7.

one in Us."[1] For Thou art holy, our God, and restest in the saints."[2] Amen.

We all live in a kind of seductive darkness of the heart and intellect, but the Lord Jesus Christ is our enlightenment. The saints always see us by the grace of God, because they are in God, and God is in them. They are one spirit with the Lord,[3] and the Lord sees everything, hears everything. Therefore when, for instance, in church you look upon the images of God's saints, believe that they see you, and, above all, that they see your heart.

By whatever passions enemies may attack you, endure it without falling into despondency, without anger, meekly and humbly, and do not allow any movement of impatience, malice, murmuring, and blasphemy to arise in your heart.

Every creature witnesses to the infinite mercy and righteousness of the Creator, even Satan himself and his angels by their shameful existence and most malicious snares against men prove the immeasurable mercy and righteousness of the Creator; for who were originally Satan and his angels? What lights, what treasuries of blessings, and of what were they deprived by their entirely voluntary ungratefulness, pride, malice, and envy, against the Lord? Did they not fall quite deliberately, intentionally, with the purpose of eternally waging war against the Creator and His creatures, reasonable beings endowed with speech? Judging by Satan's malicious actions in the world, by their number and power, we can guess how powerful a spirit was Satan, the fallen angel. Judging by his great darkness and his manifold enticements in men scattered throughout the whole world ("Which deceiveth the whole world"[4]), we can guess how bright and full of truth he originally was. "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God: every precious stone was thy covering."[5] Judging by the most evil, carnal, and impure desires suggested by him, we may conclude how amiable and perfect he was in the time of his goodness, received by him from the Creator! Judging by his craftiness and wicked wiles, we may guess how wise he was, and how much good he might have done, of how much service he might have been to his Creator in His providence for the inferior spirits or men. From this enormous colossus of evil, Satan, we may judge, what a great, good, beautiful, most bright, powerful, wise creature Satan previously was. How many gifts of the Creator's goodness were comprised in him, and of how much was he deprived by his wicked

[1] St. John xvii. 21. [2] Exclamation from Vespers. [3] 1 Corinthians vi. 17.
[4] Revelation xii. 9. [5] Ezekiel xxviii. 13.

and intentional madness! By his malice in men, judge how good he previously was; by his envy, judge of his previous goodwill; by the boundless avidity and avarice he excites in men, judge of his previous generosity; by his pride, of the greatness he received from God; by the despondency, weariness, and sometimes unbearable anguish he inspires in men, judge of his former blessedness. For he was previously as good as he is now evil! He offers an eternal lesson for humility and obedience to all the heavenly angels, and to all well-intentioned men; for however perfect the angels are, and however wise, and, in general, however perfect men may be in some things, they have received everything from the goodness of the Creator alone, and not from themselves, and must thank the Creator for everything, and pray to Him for everything with undoubting faith in His goodness and omnipotence with the hope of receiving everything from Him. The evil spirits fell through pride and malice: there is a lesson for all men in this; that is, to humble themselves before their Creator, to consider themselves as nothing, to ascribe everything to the Creator, and to live solely by the Creator and by fulfilling His will. And —how wonderful are Thy works, Lord!—that which Satan was not able and did not desire to attain, with all his wisdom, was attained by the Virgin from a perishable but spiritually immortal race; the most holy Virgin Mary attained unexampled humility, attained the highest holiness. "Hail, Thou that art highly favoured: the Lord is with Thee."[1] "For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden."[2] Likewise, all of us being of ourselves mere littleness, must constantly and deeply humble ourselves before the Creator, having recourse in everything to His mercy.

You cannot conquer any passion, any sin without gracious help; therefore, always ask the help of Christ, your Saviour. It was for this that He came into the world, for this that He suffered, died, and rose from the dead, in order to help us in everything, to save us from sin, and from the violence of the passions, to cleanse us from our sins, to bestow upon us power in Holy Ghost to do good works, to enlighten us, to strengthen us, to give us peace. You ask how you can save yourself when sin stands at every step, and you sin at every moment? There is a simple answer to this: at every step, at every moment, call upon the Saviour, remember the Saviour, and you will save yourself and others.

Avail yourself of My gifts, not separately as self-lovers, but as My children, who should have everything in common; not

[1] St. Luke i. 28. [2] St. Luke i. 48.

grudging, but freely offering unto others the fruits of the work of My hands, remembering that I give them freely to you in accordance with My fatherly goodness and man-loving bountifulness. So it is in a family. When a father, mother or brother brings presents, he bestows them upon all his children, or a brother upon his brothers; and if the children, the brothers and sisters, live in mutual love, then they do not feel happy or satisfied if their father or brother passes over one of them, or has not given one of them the same as he has given to others. And why it this? Because through their mutual love they feel as one body, because they are all like one—like a single person. So should each one of you behave. And I know how to reward you for the love which is so pleasing to Me. If I am bountiful even to those who do not fulfil My commandments—"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully"[1]—then shall I not be bountiful to My true children, for whom I have duly predestined all of My bounties? Truly, I will! "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."[2]

"If you fall, rise and you shall be saved." You are a sinner, you continually fall, learn also how to rise; be careful to acquire this wisdom. This is what the wisdom consists in: learning by heart the psalm, "Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness," inspired by the Holy Ghost to the king and prophet David, and say it with sincere faith and trust, with a contrite and humble heart. After your sincere repentance, expressed in the words of King David, the forgiveness of your sins shall immediately shine upon you from the Lord, and your spiritual powers will be at peace. The most important thing in life is to be zealous for mutual love, and not to judge anyone. Everybody shall answer for himself to God, and you must look to yourself. Beware of malice.

Orthodox Christians are like a family, the children of Jesus Christ, and in a good family the mother is always held in high respect (the Mother of God), likewise the elder brothers enjoy the respect and esteem of the younger ones, and these latter imitate the former. Lutherans and Anglicans! Why is it not so with you? Why is not the Mother of God duly reverenced and solemnly honoured and worshipped by you too? Why do you not solemnly honour and worship the holy angels and God's saints? Why do you not wish to imitate them? Or is it that you honour God alone, and worship Him only? But you should remember that the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, the holy angels, and the saints are pure images of God—friends of God,

[1] St. Luke xii. 16. [2] Romans ix. 15; Exodus xxxiii. 19.

as Abraham is called the friend of God. How can you, then, not worship the living images of God, the children and friends of God?

The world is a house. The Builder and the Master of this house is the Creator, and the Father of the Christian people living in it is God. The Mother in this house is the most holy Mother of the Lord. Always walk in the presence of your Father, in love and obedience to Him; likewise in the presence of our common Mother, the most holy Mother of the Lord, in holy love, reverence, and obedience to Her. In your bodily and spiritual needs, in your sorrows, misfortunes, and sicknesses, turn to Her with faith, hope, and love. Be holy, as the Lord God your Creator and Father is holy; as Our Lady, the Mother of God, and your Mother, too, in accordance with the Saviour's words, "Woman, behold Thy Son; . . . behold Thy Mother."[1] In order that we should not doubt our right to call the most exalted Mother of the Most High God, the most holy, most pure, most blessed, glorious Lady, our Mother, Her Eternal, Divine Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, has solved our doubt by directly allowing us, or those of us who are zealous after holiness, to call Her our Mother. "Behold thy Mother." For, in the person of St. John the Divine, this is also said to us Christians. Yes; She is indeed our most tender, most provident, and all holy Mother, guiding us, Her children, to holiness.

You see very clearly that it is extremely difficult, and without God's grace and your own fervent prayer and abstinence, impossible, for you to change for the better. You feel within yourself the action of a multitude of passions: of pride, malice, envy, greediness, the love of money, despondency, slothfulness, fornication, impatience, and disobedience; and yet you remain in them, are often bound by them, whilst the long-suffering Lord bears with you, awaiting your return and amendment; and still bestows upon you all the gifts of His mercy. Be then indulgent, patient, and loving to those who live with you, and who also suffer from many passions; conquer every evil by good, and, above all, pray to God for them, that He may correct them—that He may turn their hearts to Himself, the source of holiness. Do not help the Devil to spread his kingdom. Hallow the name of your Heavenly Father by your actions; help Him to spread His Kingdom on earth. "For we are labourers together with God."[2] Be zealous of the fulfilment of His will on earth, as it is in heaven. Forgive them that trespass against you with joy, as a good son rejoices when he has a chance of fulfilling the will of his beloved father.

[1] St. John xix. 26, 27.

[2] 1 Corinthians iii. 9.

What pleasure and joy you feel when you find some necessary and valuable object which was lost! You are ready to leap with joy. Picture to yourself how pleasing to the Heavenly Father is the sight of His lost child, the sinner who is found; the sight of His lost sheep brought to life again; the sight of His lost and found piece of silver—that is, of the living image of God—man. It is impossible to describe this joy. The joy of the Heavenly Father over His lost and found prodigal son is so great that the whole loving and kind heaven is moved to joy. "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."[1] My lost brothers and sisters! return from the way of destruction to the Heavenly Father. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[2]

Everyone should know and remember the singleness of his soul, which is the breath of God. God is single, and the soul is single. And as the soul is single, it cannot love two opposite objects—God and anything worldly, man and anything material, very pleasing to our carnal man. In order to love God with all our heart we must absolutely count everything earthly as dross, and not be allured by anything; in order to love our neighbour as ourselves we must disdain money, must not be allured by any dainties, dress, distinctions, rank, praises, or human opinion. We must especially guard the singleness of the soul during public worship and prayer at home; during the reading of the Word of God and the writings of the Holy Fathers; and, in general, during every important matter. "No man can serve two masters."[3]

A Christian ought to love God, and his neighbour, the image of God, so fervidly and deeply that he may always be able to say: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ [and of our neighbour]? Shall tribulation, or distress or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword,"[4] or money, or the sweetness of food and drink, or a luxurious dwelling, or cares about dress, or various worldly pleasures? But I count all these earthly things as dross, and worldly pleasures as a dream. I ascribe the faults of my neighbours to the corruption of nature, to the action or wiles of evil spirits, to insufficient or bad education, to the unfavourable conditions of life, to the natures of parents and tutors. Knowing my own sinfulness, my own malice, avidity, impurity, my own infirmity, I cannot hate men like unto myself, having the same weakness and vices; for I should love my neighbour as myself, and I love myself, although I know myself to be

[1] St. Luke xv. 7.
[2] St. Matthew iii. 2.
[3] St. Matthew vi. 24.
[4] Romans viii. 35.

guilty of innumerable sins; lastly, I ought to love them because we are all one body.

Bear in mind that for cleansing your heart from sins you will obtain an infinite reward—you will see God, your most gracious Creator, your Providence. The work of cleansing the heart is difficult, because it is connected with great privations and afflictions; and, therefore, the reward is great. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."[1]

People say that God is merciful; that He will have mercy upon us. Certainly, God is infinitely merciful. But if He is infinitely merciful and bountiful to us, then why do we voluntarily offend Him by our iniquities? The more He loads us with benefits, the more we ought to love Him, to be grateful to Him, and obedient to His holy commandments or orders. But where is this love, this gratitude, this obedience?

A malicious, proud man is ready to see only malice and pride in others, and is glad when any of his acquaintances, especially those who live happily and richly, but are not dear to his soul, are badly spoken of by others; and the worse they are spoken of the more he rejoices that others are bad, while he himself is perfection in comparison to them; and he is ready to perceive only evil in them, and to compare them to demons. O, malice! O, pride! O, want of love! No, you must seek, even in the malicious man, something good, and rejoice at this good, and speak joyfully of his good qualities. There is nobody in whom there is not some good; cover the evil that is in him with good, and pray to God for him, that God may "make the evil be good in His benevolence."[2] Do not be an abyss of evil yourself.

Christian! remember that Christ, the Founder of your faith, was crucified on the cross, and left you the cross. Why, then, do you live in luxury, in spaciousness, in indulgence, in idleness? He suffered dishonour, and commanded you not to shun dishonour for His name; but you seek honour. Gaze more often upon the Crucified and learn your duties. "And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the affections and lusts."[3]

"There shall not a hair of your head perish;"[4] that is, not a single holy thought of your intellect shall be lost, not only for God, but also for men. For we see that the holy

[1] St. Matthew v. 8.
[2] From the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.
[3] Galatians v. 24.
[4] St. Luke xxi. 18.

thoughts and feelings of God's saints have been preserved to us in their entirety, having been written on parchment.

In Whom is the cause of everything visible and invisible? In God. And God is invisible. Therefore, reverence the invisible God. Yearn after the invisible God. God is an eternal, All Holy, Most Gracious, Omniscient, Almighty, All Righteous, Omnipresent, Unchangeable, All Satisfied, Most Blessed Spirit. And you are the image of God. Therefore, be spiritual, despising the flesh, which is only your temporal home; be holy, kind, wise, just, watchful, and courageous, unchangeable in good, and satisfied with everything.

He who has built himself a house, he, by every right, ought to live in it. We are the houses of our Creator; He has created us for Himself, for He "has done all things for His own sake;" and it is He Who should dwell in us, and not the Devil—this murderer, thief, ravisher, this deceiver. "Come and make Thine abode in us."[1] "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him."[2] "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"[3]

Reverence every word, every thought of the Word of God, of the writings of the Holy Fathers, and, amongst them, the various prayers and hymns which we hear in church or which we read at home, because they are all the breathing and words of the Holy Ghost. It is, so to say, the "Holy Ghost Himself," Who "maketh intercession" for us, and through us, "with groanings which cannot be uttered."[4]

The great litany daily said in the Orthodox Church is the most wise litany, the litany of love; in it both living Christians and the saints are represented as fellow-members of the Body of Jesus Christ. It finishes most beautifully with the following exclamation: "Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed, glorious Lady, the Mother of God and Ever Virgin Mary, together with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and one another and all our life to Christ our God." The redoubled and supplicatory litanies are also beautiful. We have grown accustomed to them, but let us imagine that we hear them for the first time: let us put ourselves in the position of foreigners.

When praying to God, we must always represent to our-

[1] From the Prayer to the Holy Ghost.
[2] St. John xiv. 23.
[3] 1 Corinthians iii. 16.
[4] Romans viii. 26.

selves His infinite greatness, His worship by thousands of thousands and millions of millions of the angels of Heaven and the saints; also His omnipresence and omniscience, His infinite mercy, righteousness and holiness. When in prayer you call the most holy Virgin Mother of God, most holy, most pure, most spotless, most blessed—represent to yourself that Her very being is holiness eternal, immovable, unchangeable, unimaginable, "impenetrable, even to angelic eyes."[1] Think the same of all the angels and saints—that is, that their being is holiness and goodness, by the grace of Jesus Christ. Always consider as a great happiness for you to be able to converse in prayer with the Lord, or with His most pure Mother, or with the angels and saints, and pray to them with joy and trembling reverence, remembering with Whom you are conversing, you an impure and insignificant worm.

"For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory," not ours. We ourselves should like to reign with our passions —that is, to order everything as we like, to trust to our own power, and not to Thine, to seek our own glory, and not Thine; but this is the Devil's wish in us. We ought to submit everything to Thy will, seek in all matters Thy power, and do everything for Thy glory. "Do all to the glory of God."[2]

By the Cross, as well as by the sign of the Cross, the Lord Jesus Christ is ever with us, living and life-giving, and ever acts by means of various powers for our salvation, through our faith in Him, our God and Saviour. Glory for this to our Lord, who is ever present with us! "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."[3]

Communicants of the Divine Mysteries! know how most truly you become united to the Lord if you communicate worthily. What boldness you have towards the Lord and towards the Mother of God! What purity you ought to have! what meekness, humility, gentleness! what detachment from everything earthly! what a burning desire for heavenly, most pure, eternal joys!

In making the sign of the cross, believe and constantly remember that your sins are nailed to the cross. When you fall into sin, immediately judge yourself sincerely, and make the sign of the cross over yourself, saying: "Lord, Thou Who

[1] From the Acathistos to the Mother of God.
[2] 1 Corinthians x. 31. [3] St. Matthew xxviii. 20.

nailest our sins to the cross, nail also my present sin to Thy cross, and 'have mercy upon me after Thy great goodness;'"[1] and you will be cleansed from your sin. Amen.

All possible sins and passions are ready to break into the soul, and strive to do so at every moment. But fight against them valiantly and vigilantly unto your last breath, looking upon them as dreams of your imagination, as illusions of the spirits of evil.

Be so sure of the Lord's nearness to you that you may feel when praying to God that you touch Him not only with your thought and heart, but also with your mouth and tongue. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart;"[2] that is God.

Let the following conviction be inherent in your heart: all we men are one (brethren), and God, the Most merciful, Almighty, Inexhaustible Source of all things, is everything to us all. But in all of us the Devil also can and does act, the enemy of mankind, whose wickedness, worked in men, must be conquered by good, patience, meekness, indulgence.

Do not confound man—that image of God—with the wickedness that is in him, because the wickedness is only accidental, his misfortune, sickness, an illusion of the Devil; but his being—the image of God—still remains in him.

If you sin in any way before God (and we sin every day greatly), immediately say in your heart, with faith in the Lord, who hears the sobs of your heart, with the humble acknowledgment and feeling of your sins, the Psalm: "Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness;" and say the whole Psalm heartily. If it does not take effect the first time, try again, only say it still more heartily, still more feelingly, and then salvation and peace of soul shall speedily shine upon you from the Lord. Thus be always contrite; this is the true proved remedy against sins. If still you do not obtain relief, blame yourself. It shows that you have prayed without contrition, without humility of heart, without a strong desire to obtain forgiveness of sins from God; it shows that you are not deeply grieved at your sin.

If I have sinned, the Lord is my cleansing; if I am despondent or gloomy after sin, from the offences of the enemy, the Lord does away with my despondency and revives my

[1] Psalm li. 3. [2] Romans x. 8.

boldness. The Lord is everything to me. O Lord, Which truly is (Which is—that is, Who exists), glory to Thee!

The Holy Ghost, like air, fills everything and penetrates everything: "Who art everywhere present and fillest all things."[1] Those who pray fervently attract the Holy Ghost to them, and pray through the Holy Ghost.

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."[2] Why is the Lord's presence pre-eminently promised to two or three? Because there, where two or three are gathered in the name of Christ, is the Church, the union of faith and love; there is mutual love. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."[3]

The Spirit of truth—that is, of everything true that is thought of—all true thoughts, are the breathing of the Holy Ghost. Truth is as simple, easy, and life-giving for man as thought, as breath.

Believe and trust that as it is easy for you to breathe the air and live by it, or to eat and drink, so it is easy and even still easier for your faith to receive all spiritual gifts from the Lord. Prayer is the breathing of the soul; prayer is our spiritual food and drink.

To you, a pastor of men, the Lord has given to see how cruel the mental wolf is, in order, among other reasons, that you should strenuously endeavour to save both yourself from his claws and jaws and also the flock intrusted to you by God. Begin, therefore, from now to teach them with especial power, in the like manner as the Lord Himself taught, and show them how unceasingly this wolf hunts them, and through what he catches them: how he flatters their sensuality so that they may sin more easily and willingly; how many do not understand his flattery, how many serve him willingly—for instance, by gluttony, drunkenness, fornication, and adultery; covetousness, pride, vanity, malice, envy, scoffing at sacred things, slothfulness, bad language, idle speaking, mocking, a passion for dress, for dancing, a passion for theatres, cards, etc.

Everyone busies himself about elegant and clean clothing for the body, everyone tries to dress with taste and elegance, but who thinks of the incorruptible raiment, which is all defiled with sins, and in which we all shall have to appear before God

[1] Prayer to the Holy Ghost. [2] St. Matthew xviii. 20. [3] St. John xiii. 35.

the Judge? Who washes it with tears of repentance, with works of mercy, adorns it by fasting, prayer, watchfulness, and pious meditation?

"Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil."[1] The merciful Lord, having punished us, forgives us afterwards by His temporal and eternal mercy. Sometimes a sick person suffers a long while from his malady, as from a wicked tyrant; but during this malady his soul is purified like gold; he obtains the freedom of God's children, and is deemed worthy of eternal peace and blessedness.

Without trial, even common iron appears to be steel; tin appears to be silver, or an alloy of silver appears to be real silver; bronze appears to be gold, gold mixed with earth pure gold, and common glass a diamond. Only testing proves the real worth of these materials. So it is also with men. By their appearance many seem meek and humble, merciful, kind, simple, chaste, believing, etc., but trial often proves that they are evil, proud, hard-hearted, impure, avaricious, greedy, envious, rancorous, lazy, etc. Men are tried through privations and losses, sorrows, sicknesses, dishonour; and those who stand the trial are fit for the kingdom of God; whilst those who do not stand the trial are unfit, because a great admixture of evil remains in them.

Live as members of one body, as children of God, in love and harmony, in peace and tranquillity, esteeming one another, being indulgent to one another, as the Lord is indulgent to us. Do not be proud, do not envy, do not bear ill-will; subdue all carnal desires; preserve chastity; abstain from every superfluity; do not be slothful in prayer; begin every worldly work or undertaking with a short prayer; begin and end the day with fervent prayer to God, to our heavenly Lady, and to your Guardian Angel; pray for all as for yourself; wish well to all as to yourself, and do not wish or do evil to anyone.

When you see men fall into various sins against yourself, against the Lord, against their neighbours, and against themselves, do not be angry with them – for there is much anger and malice in the world without your anger—but pity them from all your soul and excuse them when they offend against you, saying to yourself: "Father! forgive them," for sin perplexes them; "they know not what they do."[2]

[1] Psalm xc. 15. [2] St. Luke xxiii. 34.

Everything earthly, material, when the heart clings to it, is disturbance, affliction, straitness, and death to our soul; and by itself and in itself our body itself is corruption, dust, and smoke. The only requirements of our soul are righteousness, holiness, truth, love, mercy, meekness, kindness, peace, spiritual freedom, or the grace of God in the heart. These treasures give life to our whole being, and are eternal. Let us strive with all our might to acquire them, and, having acquired them, to preserve, increase, and strengthen them in ourselves; for through our sinfulness every good soon evaporates.

O Lord! ever give me a meek heart, a bright, straightforward, and kind look. Grant it, Lord! Glory to Thee for the change accomplished in me by Thy right hand. I thank Thee for having taken away from me the burning thorns of my passions, my straitness, my shame, and mine infirmities, and for having bestowed upon me peace, tranquillity, freedom, power, and boldness. Strengthen, then, in me that which Thou hast accomplished in me. Glory to the power of faith, to the power of prayer; for everything that I ask of Thee believing in prayer I receive in accordance with Thy word.[1] I thank Thee for raising me from the dead so many times,[2] and for destroying the kingdom of death and sin within me.

A Christian ought to meditate upon things above, upon heaven, where Christ is, and not to cling to the corruptible blessings of the world: this is the concern of the heathen. But meanwhile we attach ourselves passionately to all earthly pleasures and things. We have perverted our life by withdrawing ourselves from the example set us by the Lord, the apostles, martyrs, reverend fathers, the unmercenary, and all the saints. They were not of this world, but we are of this world; we lead a life according to our own conception, but not a Christian life. Envy, pride, condemnation of others, enmity, hatred, malice, iniquities, carnal impurity, are not banished from our hearts, but are firmly and widely implanted in them.

Do not for one moment fulfil your own will, but fulfil the will of God, which is love for all, even for our enemies, and our holiness; whilst our will is sin of various kinds: self-love (and not the love of God), malice, hatred, pride, envy, sensuality, gluttony, drunkenness, theft, covetousness, fornication, craftiness, slothfulness, hardness of heart, and insensibility to our neighbours' sufferings, rejoicing in their misfortunes; rancour, murmuring, blasphemy, scoffing at sacred things.

[1] St. Mark xi. 24. [2] 2 Corinthians i. 9.

Great are the following words: "Grant us with one heart and one mouth to glorify and celebrate Thy glorious and majestic name, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."[1] O, that it were ever so, and that our hearts were not apart, not even from those of other men, but even from our own selves!

If I despise, hate anybody, it signifies that I unlawfully exalt, unlawfully love myself—that is, my flesh. Our heart continually flatters us, secretly exalting ourselves and depreciating others. But we must constantly see our innumerable sins in order to judge ourselves, to weep over ourselves, as for the spiritually dead. Then we shall not have time to notice the faults of others, and to condemn our neighbours for them, or to despise them; but we shall esteem them, for we shall find that they are incomparably better than us in many things.

Truly, the temple is heaven upon earth; for where the throne of God is, where the terrible mysteries are celebrated, where the angels serve together with men, where the Almighty is unceasingly glorified, there is truly heaven, and the heaven of heavens. And thus let us enter into the temple of God, and above all, into the Holy of Holies, with the fear of God, with a pure heart, laying aside all passions and every worldly care, and let us stand in it with faith and reverence, with understanding attention, with love and peace in our hearts, so that we may come away renewed, as though made heavenly; so that we may live in the holiness natural to heaven, not binding ourselves by worldly desires and pleasures.

Fasting is a good teacher: (1) It soon makes everybody who fasts understand that a man requires very little food and drink, and that in general we are greedy and eat a great deal more than is necessary—that is, than our nature requires. (2) Fasting clearly shows or discloses all the infirmities of our soul, all its weaknesses, deficiencies, sins, and passions; just as when muddy, standing water is beginning to be cleaned it shows what reptiles and what sort of dirt it contains. (3) It shows us all the necessity of turning to God with the whole heart, and of seeking His mercy, help, and salvation. (4) Fasting shows all the craftiness, cunning, and malice of the bodiless spirits, whom we have hitherto unwittingly served, and whose cunning, now that we are enlightened by the light of God's grace, becomes clear, and who now maliciously persecute us for having left their ways.

All natural bodies gravitate towards the centre of the

[1] Exclamation from the Liturgy.

earth, and all human souls naturally yearn after their spiritual Centre or Prototype—God; only sin has perverted, and still perverts this natural tendency. Fire and smoke gravitate towards the elements akin to them.

Your soul seeks true life and its natural food. Food for the mind is truth; food for the heart is peace and blessedness; food for the will is normal direction or lawfulness. Go to the Church; she will give you all this in plenteousness; she possesses all this in superabundance; she is "the pillar and ground of the truth,"[1] because in her is the Word of God, showing the origin of all things—the origin of the human race, the creation of man after the image and likeness of God, his fall, his restoration through the Saviour of men, the means of salvation, faith, hope and love. She affords us peace and blessedness through her Divine service, and especially through the sacraments. She calls us: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[2] She teaches us the true way, which our will ought undeviatingly to follow, and which will lead us to eternal life—that is, the way of God's commandments.

The Lord has given me the greatest inalienable riches—His image and likeness. He has given me Himself. As it is said: "Thou, O Lord, . . . hast given an heritage unto those that fear Thy name!"[3] What earthly riches do I want after this? What honour? There is no higher honour than to be a Christian and a member of the body of Christ, a child of God in Christ. There is no one richer than the man who always bears Christ and His grace in his heart. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."[4] And yet we are greedy, covetous, avaricious, proud, envious. What delusion, what foolishness! Man! be rich through God; everything comes to you from God.

When you look at the candles and lamps burning in church, rise in thought from the material fire to the immaterial fire of the Holy Ghost, "for our God is a consuming fire."[5] When you see and smell the fragrant incense, rise in thought to the spiritual fragrance of the Holy Ghost, "for we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ."[6] Also, in contrast, think of the

[1] 1 Timothy iii. 15.
[2] St. Matthew xi. 28.
[3] Prokeimenon at Vespers; Psalm lxi. 5.
[4] Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26.
[5] Hebrews xii. 29.
[6] 2 Corinthians ii. 15.

spiritual stench, which is sin, and endeavour to be filled with the fire of the Holy Ghost. Drive away every coldness of heart, which proceeds from the Devil, the flesh, and the world, and be yourself a sweet savour before God, by the fragrance of the virtues of meekness, gentleness, humility, obedience, abstinence, chastity, patience, and others. Flee from the stench of the passions; from malice, envy, pride, disobedience, intemperance, fornication, etc.

The voice of the readings in church, the hymns, prayers, and supplications, is the voice of our own souls pouring forth from the acknowledgment and feeling of our spiritual needs and requirements; it is the voice of all mankind acknowledging and feeling its poverty, its accursedness, its sinfulness, the necessity of a Saviour, the necessity of gratitude and praise for the innumerable benefits and the infinite perfections of God. Wonderfully beautiful are these prayers and hymns; they are the breathing of the Holy Ghost!

The sign of the cross as a blessing from a priest or a bishop is an expression of the blessing or of the favour of God to a man in Christ and for Christ's sake. What a joyful, significative, and precious ceremony this is! Blessed are all who receive such a blessing with faith! How attentive should the priests themselves be in bestowing their blessing upon the faithful! "And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them."[1]

Is it in vain that we say several times a day the thrice holy "Our Father" and other morning and evening prayers? Are we not cleansed by them from our sins and impurities? Are we not delivered from temptations, misfortunes, and unfavourable circumstances? Is it in vain that we sign ourselves with the sign of the cross? O, no; it continually acts beneficially upon us and upon those who make it with faith, especially when it is the blessing of a priest. Therefore let us continually praise the mercy and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hears and saves us, unworthy ones, by His mercy, for His holy name's sake.

All the words of the Church prayers and praises are great words, but these words, "For Thou art the resurrection and the life, and the repose," which afford such great consolation to our mortal race and constitute the hope of the Christian, are especially great. Therefore they must be pronounced with special power, with special emphasis.

[1] Numbers vi. 27.

O holy faith! by what words, by what hymns can I sufficiently praise thee for the innumerable blessings for my soul and body which thou hast bestowed upon me? for all the powers which thou hast accomplished and yet accomplishest in me? for the blessings of peace and the withdrawal of disturbance? for the blessings of freedom with the withdrawal of bitter oppression? for the blessings of spiritual light and the dispersal of the darkness of the passions? for the blessing of boldness, with the withdrawal of faint-heartedness and fear? for the blessing of spiritual power and spiritual greatness with the withdrawal of spiritual slavery and mean-spiritedness? for the blessing of holiness, with the withdrawal of sinful impurity? for deliverance from malice, envy, self-will and obstinacy, cupidity, fornication, and every spiritual corruption? Glory to Thee, my Lord God, my Benefactor, unto ages of ages! May Thou be known, Lord, in Thy faith by all Thy people and by all races of the earth, so that they all may glorify Thee with one heart and one mouth, from east to west! So be it! So be it!

Doctors who have much practice, and receive much money from sick people, ought, for their soul's sake, to give alms generously, if they believe that they have an immortal soul. Rich priests who are generously rewarded for their prayers and spiritual labours ought also to give alms freely, so as not to be condemned with Judas the betrayer, who sold the Lord of Glory for pieces of silver. Merchants who make large profits ought absolutely to practise almsgiving, and be generous in adorning God's temples. Officials who receive large salaries ought not to consider the rich recompense given them in return for their labours as their exclusive property, but should remember their poorer brethren, so that they may obtain a reward from God and purify their souls. All should provide themselves with the holy oil of charity and good works, so that they may not appear empty-handed before the Judge on the day of the terrible trial; that they may not appear naked and bare of virtue on the day when all hearts shall be scrutinised.

I thank my all holy, all merciful, and most wise Mother, the Church of God, for salutarily guiding me during this temporal life, and for educating me for the heavenly citizenship; I thank her for all the offices of prayers, for the Divine services, for the sacraments and rites; I thank her for the fasts so beneficial to me both in spiritual and bodily respects (for through them I am healthy both in spirit and body, calm, vigilant, and light; without the fasts I should feel extreme heaviness, which I indeed experienced when not fasting); I thank my spotless Mother the Church of God for enrapturing me with her

heavenly services, transporting my spirit to heaven, enlightening my intellect with heavenly truth, showing me the way to eternal life; for delivering me from the violence and ignominy of the passions, and making my life blessed.

The whole world—heaven and earth, and all that is in them, the sea, and all that is therein—is the outpouring of God's infinite mercy, of His wisdom and infinite power and might and goodness to the creatures that He has created for joy and happiness, and especially of His goodness to the human race. The world is the mirror of the goodness, mind, wisdom, and power of God; and therefore we must not cling to the world, but to God. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever."[1]

It is necessary for a Christian to fast, in order to clear his mind, to rouse and develop his feelings, and to stimulate his will to useful activity. These three human capabilities we darken and stifle above all by "surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life."[2] Through these we fall away from God, the Source of life, and fall into corruption and vanity, perverting and defiling the image of God within us. Surfeiting and sensuality nail us to the earth, and cut off, so to say, the wings of the soul. But look how high was the flight of the souls of the ascetics and abstinent! They soared in the heavens like eagles; they, the earth-born, lived by their intellect and heart in heaven, and heard there unspeakable words, and learned there Divine wisdom. And how a man lowers himself by gluttony and drunkenness! He perverts his nature, created after the image of God, and becomes like unto the beast, and even worse. O, woe unto us for our attachments, for our iniquitous habits! They hinder us from loving God and our neighbours, and from fulfilling God's commandments; they implant in us criminal carnal self-love, the end of which is everlasting destruction. Thus the drunkard does not grudge money for the sake of gratifying his flesh and stupefying himself, while he grudges giving a few pence to the poor; the smoker flings away tens and hundreds of roubles, and grudges pence to the poor, which might save his soul; those who love to dress luxuriously, or are lovers of elegant furniture or china, spend enormous sums upon dress, furniture, and china, and pass by beggars coldly and contemptuously; those who like to fare sumptuously do not grudge spending tens and hundreds of roubles for dinners, while they grudge a few coppers to the

[1] Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26. [2] St. Luke xxi. 34.

poor. It is also necessary for a Christian to fast, because, with the incarnation of the Son of God, human nature became spiritualised and made godly, and now we hasten towards the kingdom of God, which is "not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."[1] "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them."[2] To eat and drink—that is, to care for sensual pleasures—is only natural to heathenism, which, not knowing spiritual, heavenly delights, sets the whole life in the pleasures of the belly, in much eating and drinking. This is why in the Gospel the Lord so often reproves this destructive passion. Why, therefore, shall we darken and stifle our souls and kill their last spiritual powers?

Many things are taught to the pupils of educational establishments, but they often do not know the one thing which is needful—God and themselves, nor their sins, their spiritual infirmities, their nothingness without God and before God. Remember the prayer of St. Ephraem the Syrian: "Lord! let me see my transgressions." To see our sins in their multitude and in all their abomination is indeed a gift of God bestowed in consequence of fervent prayer. The above applies equally to many learned, rich, and distinguished persons: they know much, they possess much, but they do not know and often have not the essential. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight."[3] Wonderful are Thy works! It is evident that the grace of God and the blessings of this world are not the same thing, and our attachment to them is incompatible with the grace of God.

Great is Thy love, O Lord: Thou hast wholly spent Thyself out of love for me. I gaze upon the cross and marvel at Thy love to me and to the world, for the cross is the evident token of Thy love to us. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."[4] Thy life-giving Mysteries, Lord, serve as a perpetual, glorious proof of Thy love for us sinners; for this Thy Divine Body was broken for me, for us all, and this Blood was poured out for me, for us all. Lord, I glorify the wonders accomplished by Thy Holy Mysteries upon Thy believers, to whom I have administered Them; I glorify the innumerable cures of which I was witness; I glorify Their all-saving action in myself. I glorify Thy mercy to me, revealed to me in Them and through Them, and Thy life-giving power, acting in Them. Lord! in return for this Thy great love, grant that I

[1] Romans xiv. 17.
[2] 1 Corinthians vi. 13.
[3] St. Matthew xi. 25, 26.
[4] St. John xv. 13.

may love Thee with all my heart, and my neighbour as myself, grant that I may also love my enemies, and not only those who love me.

Lord! teach us to live in mutual love, and strengthen this love in us by Thy Holy Spirit; subdue the outbursts of the passions, which hinder heavenly, evangelical love, and make our hearts dead to earthly delights. Grant, Lord, that I may ever prefer Thy grace, Thy peace, Thy righteousness and holiness to all earthly blessings, and that I may abide in it all the days of my life, unto my last breath.

Want of spiritual education, of the development, of the softening, and amendment of the heart is a thousand times more culpable than want of mental education; for a mentally uneducated man is in darkness and is deserving of indulgence and pity, whilst an educated man, given up to the passions and vices, to malice, pride, scorn, envy, gluttony, surfeiting, drunkenness, covetousness, fornication, and other passions, with all his knowledge, and also with the knowledge of the will of God, is a man whose heart is hardened, and who is dead to God; for he does not apply the principles he has learned to practice; he does not fulfil the will of God, but transgresses it with even greater fearlessness and insolence than the uneducated. The uneducated man's simplicity of heart, meekness, gentleness, humility, silence, and patience are dearer to God than all our knowledge, all of our external polish, than all our studied expressions, all our feigned courtesy, than all our lengthy prayers, than all our artful speeches. Even sins themselves, being sins of ignorance, are more excusable in the uneducated. Therefore respect simple want of education and learn from it that which is not possessed by the so-styled educated—that is, simplicity, gentleness, patience, and other virtues. The uneducated are the babes in Christ, to whom the Lord sometimes reveals His mysteries.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."[1] These are the words of Jesus Christ concerning the Apostles. This is great praise to them. In what does it consist? In the fact that the Apostles, living in the world, were strangers to it, strangers to its attachments, did not seek in it either glory or riches, or happiness or tranquillity, but were like beings of another world, the heavenly one. They meditated upon and cared for heavenly things and sought after incorruptible heavenly glory, incorruptible riches, heavenly joys and heavenly rest in God, and union with Him; whilst we sinners are of this world, because we seek the glory of this world, material riches, health, length of

[1] St. John xvii. 16.

life, the enjoyment of the blessings of this world, earthly tranquillity, earthly joys. But all our misfortunes, passions, temptations, and failure in the Christian life proceed from attachment to the world and its goods.

Why is it necessary to pray at home and go to church to attend Divine service? And why is it necessary for you to eat and drink, and walk in the fresh air every day, or to work every day? In order to support the life of the body, and strengthen it. It is also absolutely necessary to pray in order to support and stimulate the life of the soul, to strengthen the soul, which is sick with sins, to cleanse it, just as you employ certain kinds of food and drink to cleanse the body from injurious humours, or impurities. If, therefore, you do not pray, then you behave most unwisely, and unadvisedly, supporting, gratifying, and strengthening your body in every way, but leaving your soul in neglect. Every man is dual, for he consists of soul and body.

It is better not to pass on the words of reproach that have been transmitted to us by anyone, but to keep silence concerning them, or transmit words of love and good-will, then our spirit will be tranquil. But to pass on words of animosity and envy is very hurtful; they often produce, in the impatient and self-loving men, to whom they refer, a spiritual tempest, rekindle extinct enmity, and occasion dissension. We must have Christian patience, and the wisdom of the serpent.

Why is it that one evil word, one word of calumny, produces the most disagreeable impression upon us, agitates us to the depths of our souls, whilst, on the contrary, sometimes thousands of good words, for instance, concerning God and His works in the world, do not reach our hearts at all, and are lost in the air? The Devil comes and catches away the word, sown in the hearts of men. It is also he, on the other side, who sows and grows in our hearts the seeds of evil, and does not miss the slightest opportunity of implanting enmity and envy for our neighbour in our hearts. One glance of our neighbour at us, often quite innocent, but appearing suspicious to us, is sufficient to give rise to a feeling of enmity in us towards him. And, therefore, do not let us take to heart any evil occasioned to us, intentionally or unintentionally, by our neighbour, for we know the author of it, and that "the whole world lieth in wickedness,"[1] from its beginning, but let us bear

[1] 1 St. John v. 19.

every affront offered us serenely, praying for those who offend us, as for our benefactors, for even in their affronts we may often hear words of good-will towards us, although not proceeding from a good heart. May the Lord teach them, and not impute their behaviour unto us as sin to them, and let us be more careful, so as not to give place to the Devil.

In this life we sin continually, and at the same time we are so self-loving, that we cannot endure our faults and sins to be reproved, especially before others; but in the future life our transgressions will be reproved before the whole world. Remembering this terrible judgment seat, let us bear reproof here humbly and gently, and let us correct ourselves of all our faults and sins; let us especially bear reproof from our superiors, and may the Lord teach them to reprove our faults, not maliciously, but lovingly, and in the spirit of meekness.

Love to be reproved of sin by others, justly or unjustly here, in preference to being reproved at the dreadful judgment seat, before the whole world, before all the Angels and men. O, the unbearable fear and shame of Thy terrible judgment seat, Lord!

We must pity every evil man, and not be angered with him, and not thus gratify Satan; we must look upon even every enemy, simply as upon God's creation, as upon one created after the image of God, and as upon our own member, and not breathe malice against him, that is, not become a devil, for every one who breathes malice becomes a devil himself, while he is angered. We must always be meek, gentle, kind-hearted, patient, as though we did not notice the malice of others, we must "overcome evil," or wicked people "with good,"[1] by kindness, benefits. May God deliver us from evil suspiciousness, through which everything in our neighbour has the worst construction put upon it; his movements, gestures, look, voice, step, and every word.

I thank Thee, Lord, for bestowing new life upon me each time, when, with tears of repentance and gratitude, I celebrate the Divine Liturgy and partake of Thy most pure and life-giving Mysteries. To Thy Holy Mysteries I owe: the prolongation of my existence until now, the purity of my ways, and my good report amongst Thy people. May Thy great Name be glorified more and more in me and in all Thy people. May they be called by Thy great Name, throughout the whole

[1] Romans xii. 21.

world; Thy kingdom come, the kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in all our hearts, as Thou hast said: "I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people,"[1] and may Thy will, Thy holy, most wise, all-good, most perfect, and most blessed will be done in earth, in all Thy people, and in me, a sinner, as it is in heaven, for our own will is erring, short-sighted, sinful, destructive, unloving, evil, envious, proud, slothful, luxury-loving, money-loving, and avaricious.

Poor people's need is persistent in its requirements, and is, sometimes, even shameless, so also our passions are obstinate and persistent, insolent and shameless—fornication, malice for instance, avarice, covetousness, envy, pride, theft, heresy, dissent, superstition, idolatry. But let us yield to the reasonably persistent requests of the needy poor and suffering; it will serve to our salvation, to our eternal bliss. For as the poor and suffering compel us to compassion, so let us mutually compel ourselves to almsgiving; let us compel ourselves to good works, whilst there is yet time, as sin compels us to that by which we continually transgress and anger God, and increase for ourselves the food of the fire of Gehenna, which, by degrees, already begins to be kindled here in our hearts, and foreshows to us the eternal flame, where there shall be everlasting lamentation and gnashing of teeth. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."[2] The enemy likewise endeavours to force into Gehenna all the imprudent, unbelieving, unrepentant, and those who are passionately attached to the blessings of this life.

Why, after every six days, is a day of rest observed? In order that we may continually remember that after the labours of this present life, the day of eternal rest will come; for in accordance with the apostle, "there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."[3] And Sunday betokens the day of the general resurrection, after which a day of rest shall come for all those who have done good work in this present life, in Christ Jesus.

All offerings and charity to the poor will not replace love for our neighbour, if there is no love in the heart; therefore, in bestowing charity, we must be careful that it should be bestowed lovingly, from a sincere heart, willingly, and not with a feeling of vexation against the poor. The very word *charity* shows that it should be an act or an offering of the heart,

[1] 2 Corinthians vi. 16, 18: Leviticus xxvi. 12; Jeremiah iii. 19.
[2] St. Matthew xi. 12. [3] Hebrews iv. 9.

and should be bestowed with feeling or pity for the unfortunate condition of the poor person, and with a feeling of, or contrition for, our sins, to cleanse which the charity is bestowed; "for alms . . . [according to the Scripture] shall purge away all sin."[1] He who bestows charity unwillingly and with vexation, avariciously, does not recognise his sins, has not learned to know himself. Charity is, first of all, a benefit to those who bestow it.

"Be not overcome of evil [your neighbour's], but overcome evil with good,"[2] chiefly, by prayer for those who do evil unto you. Let us commit ourselves and each other, and all our life, with all our defects, mutual offences, unto Christ our God. Let us not take vengeance upon anyone ourselves, not by a single thought or intention, but let us leave vengeance to God. "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."[3] We must love our enemies, it is the Devil who teaches and incites them to bear us enmity.

The theatre lulls the Christian life to sleep, destroys it, communicating to the life of Christians the character of the life of heathens. "They all slumbered and slept";[4] this disastrous sleep is produced, amongst other things, also by the theatre. And what besides? The sciences, taught in the spirit of heathenism, worldly cares carried to excess, love of gain, ambition and sensuality. The theatre is the school of this world, and of the Prince of this world—that is, the Devil, but sometimes he is transformed into an angel of light[5] in order to more easily tempt people who are not far-seeing, he sometimes introduces an apparently moral play on to the stage, but this is done in order that everybody should proclaim and repeat that the theatre is a most moral institution, and that it is not less worth frequenting than the church, and even, perhaps more so, because in church everything is the same, whilst in the theatre there is a variety of plays, scenery, costumes and actors.

In order to test yourself, whether you love your neighbour in accordance with the Gospel, pay attention to yourself at the time when others offend you, abuse you, mock at you, or do not render you the respect due to you, and which is customary in social intercourse, or when your subordinates err against the rules of the service, and are negligent. If you

[1] Tobit xii. 9. [2] Romans xii. 21.
[3] Romans xii. 19; Deuteronomy xxxii. 35.
[4] St. Matthew xxv. 5. [5] 2 Corinthians xi. 14.

remain calm on such occasions, are not filled with the spirit of enmity, hatred, impatience—if you continue to love these persons as much as previously, before their offences or negligence, then you do love your neighbour in accordance with the Gospel; but if you become irritable, angry, agitated, then you do not do so. "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?"[1]

As we are strangers, sojourners, and travellers to the heavenly kingdom, we must not burden ourselves with worldly cares, nor become attached to earthly blessings, riches, pleasures, honours, in order that these cares and attachments should not hinder us in the hour of death, nor make it shameful. The Christian, even here on earth, must accustom himself to live the heavenly life; in fasting, in renunciation, in prayer, love, meekness, gentleness, patience, courage, and mercy. How hard will the hour of death be to the man who in his lifetime made his idols of money, or food and drink, or earthly honours! In that hour none of these things shall serve him, whilst his heart, being strongly attached to them, does not possess the true treasure, which would give him life, that is, virtue. And therefore, in order to die more easily—and we must all die—we must not love anything in the world. "And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content."[2]

In church I am truly as if in heaven upon earth; here I see the images of the Lord, of the Most Pure Mother of God, of the holy Angels; here is God's throne, here is the life-giving cross, here is the eternal Gospel, that word of God, by which all things were created; here are the images of the Saints; I feel myself in the visible presence of God, of His Mother, of the heavenly powers, and of all the Saints. This is truly heaven on earth: here I know that I am, and feel myself indeed a member of Christ and of His Church, especially during the celebration of the most heavenly Liturgy, and the Communion of the Holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. O, how I ought to live, think, feel, speak, in order to worthily be in this heaven on earth! I ought to live worthily of the high calling to which I am called by the grace of the much-endowing God. How I ought to live, in what meekness, humility, purity, abstinence, in order to worthily name my Lady, the Most Pure Mother of God, my Master, the Lord of glory! Lord, make me worthy of such an abode! I desire to live worthily of the Christian

[1] St. Matthew v. 47; St. Luke vi. 32. [2] 1 Timothy vi. 8.

calling, but I find no power in myself to attain this; sin unceasingly tempts and wars against my soul.

Call undoubtingly, in the simplicity of your heart, upon the Lord God, also upon the Angels and the Saints, who by the grace of God and through their association or union with God, and the simplicity of their being, most speedily, with the rapidity of lightning, both hear and fulfil our prayers in accordance with the will of God.

To love God with all our heart means not to have any attachments to anything earthly, and to surrender all our heart to the Lord God, fulfilling His Will in everything, and not our own; to love God with all the soul means always to have all our mind in Him, to stablish all our heart in Him, and to submit all our will to His Will in all circumstances of life, both joyful and sorrowful; to love God with all our strength means to love Him so that neither any opposing power nor any circumstance of life, neither tribulation nor distress, nor persecution, nor peril, nor the sword, nor height, nor depth,[1] shall be able to separate us from the love of God; to love God with all our understanding means always to think of God, of His mercy, long-suffering, holiness, wisdom, omnipotence, of His works, and to withdraw ourselves by every means from thoughts of vanity and from evil recollections. To love God means—to love righteousness with all our soul, and to hate iniquity, as it is said: "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity;[2] to love God means—to hate oneself, that is, our old carnal man: "If any man come to Me, and hate not his own life, he cannot be My disciple."[3] In us, in our thoughts, in our hearts and in our will, there is an evil power extraordinarily living and active, which always, every day and every moment, endeavours to estrange us from God, suggesting thoughts, desires, cares, intentions, undertakings, words and acts of vanity, exciting the passions and forcibly instigating us to them, namely, to malice, envy, covetousness, pride and ambition, vanity, slothfulness, disobedience, obstinacy, deceit and intemperance. To love God means—to fulfil His commandments: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words. He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings."[4]

What a wealth the Lord has of light, air, water, earth, and fire—of these five material elements, out of which our body is formed, and by which it lives! What a wealth of

[1] Romans viii. 35, 38, 39.
[2] Psalm lxv. 8.
[3] St. Luke xiv. 26; St. Matthew xvi. 24.
[4] St. John xiv. 23, 24.

the products of the earth and water! And all these are chiefly for the use of man, the king of creatures! Thanks be to Thee, our Creator! Glory to Thee, our Providence and our Redeemer, Who hast created us after Thine own image and likeness, and hast deigned to take our nature upon Thyself!

In what does the true wealth of a man consist? In his image and likeness to God, and not in lands, nor money; neither in various earthly sciences and arts, nor in property of various kinds, nor in many servants, nor in many clothes, nor, in general, in a multitude of earthly blessings, for all these are corruptible and temporal; whilst the soul—the image of God—is eternal, and its riches are—virtue, holiness, humility, gentleness, temperance in all things, faith, hope, and love.

When I gaze in meditation and with faith upon the holy icons in church, and upon all its appurtenances, then I am lost in wonderful contemplation; the whole temple appears to me to be sacred history in action, a wonderful scripture of the works of God, accomplished in the human race. Here I see the history in action of our fall and of our restoration by God's wonderful ordering, and our elevation by the Lord's incarnation, our being made godly, and our exaltation into heaven; here I picture to myself the archangel Gabriel announcing the Birth of the Son of God of the Virgin; here I see the Birth itself of the Child God, the Virgin Mother, the manger at Bethlehem; here is the Circumcision; there is the Baptism; further is the meeting of the Child God in the temple by Simeon; there is the Transfiguration of our Lord, and the effusion of light on Mount Thabor; there the Entrance into Jerusalem of the righteous Saviour, meek King; the Lord's Supper, and the institution of the all-saving Sacrament of the Holy Communion; there are the all-saving sufferings of the Lord of glory; I see as though it were Golgotha itself, and the Lord crucified for the sins of the world; I see the descent into hell of the Conqueror of hell, and the deliverance of the captives of hell, His Resurrection, Ascension into heaven, all for the sake of mankind, and for my sake. In the church I am lost in Divine contemplation, and thank the Lord for having so greatly loved me, for having so greatly honoured and blessed me. But when I look within myself—in my own heart, my God, what do I see! I see an abyss of voluntary and involuntary sins, an abyss of infirmities, temptations, afflictions, oppressions, fears, snares of the enemy, impenetrable darkness, thousands of falls, thousands of destructions and deaths. Sometimes I see within myself the very hell itself.

The whole power, character, and craftiness of the Devil's temptations to men consist in the fact that he has enticed and entices, has incited and incites, men to love the world and that which is in it—the vain wisdom of this world, riches, glory, distinctions, earthly delights—and to turn away from God, from the heavenly kingdom and bliss, to love vain earthly things, to strive to invent and acquire as many of them as possible, and to despise the soul and its real requirements, to love the flesh, its health, colour, beauty, carnal sensuality, and to hate the soul—that is, virtue—to forget the immortality of the soul, its Prototype—God, so that it should not even think of immortality and of the way that leads to immortality, of God, and of union with Him. Blessed are the Saints of God who despised the world and loved God, who despised the flesh and diligently cared for their souls, for that which is eternal. How pitiful, how accursed are we, who love the world and its vain blessings, who cherish the flesh and despise the soul!

If some Christians cannot comprehend our Orthodox faith, its Sacraments, it proves that the minds and hearts of such persons are too impure and passionate to bear its purity and brightness, just as sick eyes cannot bear the light of the sun. This heavenly treasure can only be comprehended by the hearts of those who free their minds and feelings from worldly attachments.

If all pastors or priests of God, and their flocks, prayed sincerely and unanimously, with one accord, by means of those prayers, which the Church utters aloud to us or says secretly, then what should we not entreat of God? What blessings should we not obtain, from what sins and passions, evil, misfortunes and disasters should we not be saved? These prayers are the most wise, expedient, most pleasing to God, the most powerful and capable of inclining the Lord to every mercy. May the Lord grant to us all to pray to Him unanimously, sincerely, powerfully, undistractedly!

Those who attend the Divine service of the Orthodox Church, and study the science of Divine service, must bear in mind that the service here on earth is a preparation for all-rejoicing service to God in heaven; that in serving God with the body, it is still more necessary to serve God with the soul and with a pure heart; that in hearing the Divine service, they must learn to serve God as those Saints served Him, whose lives and works of faith, hope, and love we hear of during the Divine service; that God should be above all served by deed and truth, and not only by words

and the tongue. We are called to serve God by our very being: we are given an upright stature in order that we may continually look upon God, thank and glorify Him; our understanding, heart, will, and all feelings are given to us for the same purpose.

Lord! grant that I may ever pour forth my supplications to Thee for the whole world and for the fulfilment of the requests of the whole Church, with all comprehensive, unfeigned love, for by Thy grace I have to pray for the sins of all and for mine own. Grant, O Lord, God the Father, that I may contemplate Thine unspeakable love unto the world, manifested in giving unto us Thy beloved, Only-begotten Son. Grant, O God, Son of God, that I may contemplate Thine exhaustion in the world and on the cross for the sake of our salvation; grant, O God, the Holy Ghost, that I may contemplate Thy grace, abundantly outpoured and still being outpoured upon the world, for the sake of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, and so often filling even my sinful heart; O Holy Trinity, grant that I may continually glorify Thee with my heart and mouth, and above all by my deeds!

Those who reject fasting forget from what the falling into sin of the first men proceeded (from intemperance), and what means against sin and temptation were indicated to us by the Saviour, when He Himself was tempted in the desert (He fasted forty days and nights); they do not know, or do not wish to know, that a man most frequently falls away from God through intemperance, as was the case with the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and with Noah's contemporaries—for intemperance is the cause of every sin in men; those who reject fasting take away from themselves and from others the arms against their flesh, with its manifold passions, and against the Devil, both of which are especially powerful against us through our intemperance; therefore they are not soldiers of Christ, for they throw down their arms and give themselves up willingly as prisoners to their sensual and sin-loving flesh; lastly, they are blind and do not see the connection between the causes and the consequences of acts.

We should never forget that we are fallen, impure, corrupt creatures, guilty before the God of righteousness, and that we ought always to humble ourselves deeply before Him and before one another. This is instilled into us by the daily prayers of the Church, such as: God, be merciful to me a sinner . . . . O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God . . . . O Heavenly King . . . . Holy God . . . . Most Holy Trinity . . . . Our Father . . . . the morning and evening prayers, and nearly all the prayers. Accordingly, let all young people who are learning know and remember that they come from a sinful root, and are themselves

subjected to every kind of sin, and lay this knowledge as a foundation for all other knowledge, and, knowing much, let them not pride themselves upon this, but strive above all for the cleansing of their soul and body.

Love your earthly country and the Father of this country, for it has educated you, enlightened you, distinguished and honoured you, and has provided you with everything; but especially love the heavenly country, the Father of the future life; that country is incomparably more to be honoured and dearer than this one, for it is holy and righteous, immovable, infinite, incorruptible, beautiful, blessed; because it has given and gives you incomparably greater advantages and blessings than this earthly one; because the Father of that country is not a mean mortal man, but the Eternal God, Who has created everything; it has given you the name of a child of God, of an inheritor of God, and a joint-heir with Christ; because the heavenly Father will make you a partaker of all the blessings of His kingdom, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man."[1] That country has been gained for you by the priceless blood of the Son of God. But in order to be a member of it, respect and love its laws, as you are obliged to respect, and do respect, the laws of your earthly country, for otherwise you cannot become a citizen of so sublime a country; love also that spiritually-educating school (the Church), which makes us into members and citizens of that country.

The bodiless enemy fights vigorously against us during Divine service, because at this time, by God's grace, through our intermedium, regeneration of our souls is accomplished; therefore, do not let be us be depressed by the calumnies of the Devil, but let us take courage and be strong, looking with our spiritual eyes upon Christ, the Founder of all great deeds, invisibly standing before us, and mysteriously accomplishing the regeneration of our souls.

God's Saints are—beautiful, incorruptible, fragrant flowers. Do not touch these flowers with lips defiled by sins—that is, pray to them with a pure heart and pure lips, not carelessly, not with distracted thoughts, but with reverence, and without haste. They are speaking heavens; they led a heavenly, wonderful life on earth, doing great deeds, they lived in great love, in deep humility, gentleness, patience, self-denial, loving God above all things.

In the Church are all our sweetest hopes and expectations, our peace, our joy, together with cleansing and sanctification.

[1] 1 Corinthians ii. 9.

It is there that the truth of the future resurrection, of the victory over death, is so often announced. Who that loves life would not love the Church with all his heart! Everything that is best, most exalted, most precious, holy and wise, is found in the Church. In the Church—is the ideal of mankind; the Church is—heaven upon earth.

In the Church we are freed from worldly enchantment, and from the intoxication of worldly passions and desires; we become enlightened, sanctified, cleansed in our souls; we draw near to God, we are united with God ("Who, by Thy glorious Childbirth, hast united God the Word with men").[1] How worthily reverenced and loved should the temple of God be! How God's Saints loved it!

We ought not to grieve or become irritated at anything because, by frequent vexation and irritability, we form the morally and physically very injurious habit of irritability, whilst by bearing opposition with equanimity we form the good and useful habit of enduring everything calmly and patiently. Many occasions for vexation may arise in this life through our innumerable mutual imperfections, and if we were to become irritated upon every such occasion, our life could not last more than a few months. Besides, matters cannot be set right by vexation and irritation, but, on the contrary, only become worse. Therefore, it is better to be always calm, even always full of love and respect for morally sick humanity, or to speak more particularly in regard to our friends, relatives, and subordinates. For man is not an angel, and, besides, our life is so constituted that we sin daily, and almost involuntarily, even though we do not wish: "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil, which I would not, that I do."[2] And the Lord taught us to look indulgently upon the frequent negligences and falls of men, having said: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."[3] "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."[4] And who of us does not wish that others should behave indulgently and patiently to him in his needs, stumblings and falls, negligences and omissions? This is why the apostle also teaches us long-suffering and indulgence: "Charity," says the Apostle Paul, "suffereth long, and is kind . . . . is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, beareth all things . . . . and never faileth."[5]

Free-thinkers and atheists say that religion, the Church, the

[1] Prayer to the Holy Mother of God at Compline.
[2] Romans vii. 19.
[3] St. Matthew vi. 12.
[4] St. Matthew vii. 12.
[5] 1 Corinthians xiii. 4-8.

Divine service, the sacraments and rites, were invented by men in order to keep people in fear and submission, and to maintain morality, and, perhaps, also in order to collect revenues from them. This is how God's mercy and His wonderful ordering for our salvation, the very incarnation, sufferings and death of the Son of God for our sakes, are blasphemed by the ignorant and free-thinkers who have lost the fear of God. But look upon their life; how do they live, and do they live long? Having lost their strength and health in dissipation and drunkenness, they become prematurely aged, decrepit, dull, fall ill and die.

Christian love prefers rather to endure all the outward discomforts of life, narrowness, want of fresh air, losses, than to allow impatience, vexation, irritation, anger, murmuring, through these outward and similar discomforts, against those who inconvenience us by living at our expense and at the expense of our tranquillity, either through need or out of caprice. Love endures everything and bears everything to its own detriment, to the detriment of its own material and bodily life: for where love is, there is God's grace and every good thing, there is tranquillity, there is sufficiency. A Christian suffers everything so long as he is not deprived of God's grace, which is the greatest blessing to him.

What spiritual storms, hurricanes, fearful, fiery, sudden whirlwinds often occur in the life of man, in the life of those who endeavour to lead a Christian life, and to serve God by prayer, interceding for themselves and others before His unspeakable mercy! It is only by God's mercy that the bark in which our soul travels over life's sea towards the eternity awaiting it, is not entirely wrecked and lost!

A priest ought to endeavour by every means to maintain within himself courage, boldness, daring, in spite of the bodiless enemy, who continually sows in him his illusive fear, his foolish dread; otherwise he cannot be a reprover of human vices, nor a true celebrant of the sacraments. Daring is a great gift of God and a great treasure of the soul! Courage or boldness plays an important part in earthly warfare, for it simply works wonders; but in the spiritual warfare it does far more.

The source of every true joy, of all true tranquillity and peace of conscience, of cleansing, of spiritual and bodily healing, the source of spiritual power and boldness, flows in the temple, whilst theatres and various worldly distractions and consolations can never replace that which a true Christian receives in the

temple, where God Himself comforts the souls of believers and those whose hearts are turned to Him, as a mother comforts her child. It is from the temple, too, that our departed ones receive consolation and solace, with the cleansing from their sins and forgiveness. How ardently we should love the temple, how we should adorn it! And so do all those who recognise its value; and the Church prays for them, saying: Let us pray for them that, with faith, piety, and fear of God, enter in; and further: Let us pray for them that bring forth fruit and do good deeds in this holy and all-venerable temple; or, Hallow those that love the beauty of Thine house. Glorify them in return by Thy Divine might.

The world is immeasurably great, there are incalculably many beings inhabiting it, but what order there is in all its course, in all the life of the world (of nature)! Immeasurably great is the world of celestial spirits, of Angels, but what order there is in the angelic world, what strict fulfilment of the will of God! Great is the human world, too, but how much disorder, self-will, how many deformities and misfortunes proceeding from these there are in it, misfortunes of maladies, of deaths of various kinds—of wars, famine, inundations, fires, disasters through storms and bad weather, disasters through drunkenness, gluttony, covetousness, falsehood, perjury, suicide, murder! They are innumerable! Woe unto us! But how will it be there—beyond the grave, in eternity?

Man is a wonderful, grand, most wise, artistic production of the most perfect Artist, God; he was not originally defiled, but incorruptible and pure; only sin, that monstrous breed of the spirit of darkness, that foul, foolish, and evil power, made him defiled, sickly, impure, and corruptible, both in spirit and body, in accordance with his double nature. However, the most wise and almighty, the all-merciful Artist did not allow His and our enemy to entirely destroy His beautiful and grand creation, and made Himself a body like unto ours, and borrowed a soul in the womb of His Most Pure Virgin-Mother; by His incarnation, His teaching, miracles, sufferings, death and resurrection, by His wonderful and most wise orderings, He again restores to the work of His hands its former and even greater beauty and glory; He again bestows upon it incorruptibility, holiness, and wonderful Divine beauty, and raises it to the highest bliss, making human nature godly, and setting it with Himself on the throne of the Godhead. Glory be to Thee, most merciful, the most wise and almighty Artist!

O, my invisible Benefactor, by Whom I unceasingly live!

Thou who hearest me, Thou Who fulfillest for my good all my heart's desires, Thou Who savest me from my sins, from the malice of my invisible enemies, Thou Who mercifully orderest my destiny, my enlightenment, my succour, my glory, my power, my strengthening, when shall I see Thee? When shall I see my Benefactor and Creator face to face? And thou, mine enemy, thou Devil, who continually fillest my soul with sin, thou who art crafty, flattering, evil, who continually slayest me, darkening, weakening me, covering my face with shame and dishonour, when shall I entirely free myself from thee, through the grace, bounties, and love to mankind of my Lord Jesus Christ? When will every possibility of pouring the poison of thy malice into my heart be taken from thee?

"What do I need?" I need nothing upon earth besides the indispensable. What do I need? I need the Lord, I need His grace, His kingdom within me. On earth, in this place of my journeying, of my temporary instruction, I have nothing of mine own; everything is God's, and everything is transitory, is destined for my temporary use; my abundance is—the inheritance of my poorer brethren. What do I need? I need true, Christian, living, active love? I need a loving heart, compassionate towards my neighbours; I need joy at their welfare and abundance, sorrow for their sorrows and sickness, for their sins, infirmities, disorders, deficiencies, misfortunes, poverty; I need warm and sincere sympathy for them in all the circumstances of their lives, to rejoice with those who rejoice, and to weep with those who weep. It is time that we ceased to give place to our self-love, to egoism, to live only for ourselves, to draw everything to ourselves only—riches and pleasures and worldly honours. We ought not to live, but to die; we ought not to rejoice, but to suffer, we who bear within ourselves the poison of self-love—for self-love is a poison continually poured into our heart by the Devil. O, may I exclaim with the Psalmist: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."[1] Lord, Thou knowest my heart and all its movements, and of the writing of these lines—grant me that which I ask of Thee! With me this is impossible, but "with Thee all things are possible."[2] Grant me the true life, disperse the darkness of the passions, destroy their power by Thy power!

What is the relation between the word and the deed? The word of God called the visible and invisible world from

[1] Psalm lxiii. 24, 25. [2] St. Mark x. 27

non-existence into existence; the word in the mouth of God—the word was deed. Therefore the word and the deed ought to be inseparable from each other, as the soul and body are inseparable in their being. He who faithfully and continually fulfils the word of Christ, with Whom the word is the deed, can even now accomplish great and wonderful deeds, and everything obeys His word: the demons obey Him, maladies are cured, and human morality is taught.

The cross is in Christ, and Christ is on the cross; the cross is the image of the crucified Christ, the Son of God, and therefore the sign of the cross and even its shadow are terrible unto the demons, as the sign of Christ Himself, as the shadow of Him, crucified. Therefore it is very important to sanctify the water by immersing the cross in it; through this it becomes healing, and drives away demons.

A Christian is—the vessel of God, the temple of God, the house of God. O, how worthy of honour is the true Christian, how zealously he ought to shun every sin, and how greatly Christians ought to respect one another!

The most abominable enemy endeavours to destroy love by love itself: love for God and our neighbour—by love for the world, for its fleeting blessings and its corrupt, impious habits, by carnal love, by the love of riches, of honours, of pleasure, of various amusements. Therefore let us extinguish every love for this world in ourselves, and let us kindle in ourselves, by self-denial, love for God and our neighbour. Every beauty in this world (personal beauty) is only a faint, insignificant shadow of the uncreated beauty, of the unspeakable goodness of God's face; every earthly enjoyment is nothing in comparison to future delights. I pray, Lord, that the faith of Christ may penetrate into the depths of my heart, that Christ's Gospel may penetrate all my thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds, into all my bones and my brains, and not me only, but all men, as the universal truth, the highest wisdom, and the life eternal. "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent."[1]

How fragrant are the bones of the Saints! What a wonderful perfume the relics of God's Saints emit! What a great blessing it is to gain the sweet-smelling grace of the Holy Ghost and the life eternal! Why do we run after corruption? Why have we loved the stink of sins, of poisonous passions?

[1] St. John xvii. 3.

Lord, in our prayers to Thee, we ask the intercession of the Saints, these spiritual sweet scents, that fragrance of Thy perfumes! Accept their prayers for us, fragrant with love and purity, and save us from the evil odour of sins, for our hearts are unclean and our mouths impure, and we are unworthy of most sweet converse with Thee. Everything in us is—earthly, corrupt, impure, and evil, whilst they, Thy Saints, are the purest fragrance; and, above all, Thy Most Pure Mother, Thy living, light-bearing abode, She is purer than all the brightness of the sun, more fragrant than all perfumes, for heaven and earth are full of the fragrance of Her holiness and of Her Divine virtues.

Pronounce the Name of God with the deepest reverence, remembering, that everything was brought by God from non-existence into existence, and that everything which exists is maintained in good order solely by His mercy, omnipotence, and wisdom. Pronounce with the deepest reverence the Name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, "by Whom all things were made, and all things are governed; Who, until now, upholds all things by the word of His power";[1] Who produces times and seasons — summer, autumn, winter, and spring; Who brings forth all the fruits of the earth, peoples the earth with men and animals, the air with birds, the sea, the lakes, and rivers with fishes; Who multiplies the human race and provides it with all blessings—saves it from sins and evil spirits, and prepares an abode for those who love Him in the Kingdom of Heaven; Who, until now, makes the luminaries light the earth or moderate the darkness of the night; Who diffuses such vivifying air for all living creatures to breathe; Who has given such wonderful properties to fire, that it warms, burns, and lights; Who created the earth, capable of easily revolving round such an immense planet as the sun, as well as on its own axis; capable of generating innumerable sorts of plants; water, capable of being turned into an innumerable variety of juices in an innumerable multitude of fruits, trees, shrubs, and grasses. "Our God doeth wondrous things."[2] He is all-good and almighty, most wise, the God of mercy, bounties, and love to men. "There is none like unto Thee, O Lord!"[3] Reverently pronounce also the Name of the Most Pure Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Ever-Virgin Mary, Who gave birth to Him for our salvation; through Her, by the Lord's grace, we were found worthy of innumerable blessings: of the forgiveness of sins, of sanctification, of enlightenment, of renewal, deliverance from eternal death, of elevation to heaven, of becoming the sons

[1] Hebrews i. 3. [2] Psalms lxxii. 18, lxxvi. 15. [3] Psalm xxxvi. 8.

of God, of being made godly, and of inheriting life eternal. Reverently pronounce the names of Christ's Apostles, who were His eye-witnesses and His servants, who carried His Divine teachings throughout all the world, who implanted and spread throughout the earth the saving faith and Church of Christ — faith in renewal and salvation; also the names of the martyrs, who were born by their blood into eternal life, of the venerable Fathers, who, by the mortification of their flesh, mortified in themselves the sins and passions, and attained blessed renewal and eternal life; also the names of the unmercenary, who, by their disinterestedness, obtained for themselves the priceless treasures of the spirit and of eternal life; and the names of all the Saints.

This very flesh which we cherish, rest, gratify, and adorn so much, is—the enemy of our soul, a very crafty and dangerous enemy; it continually resists the love of God, the will of God, the commandments of God, and longs to fulfil its own will, and nearly always succeeds in doing so; unless the Lord God, in His merciful and wise providence for our salvation, opposes a powerful obstacle to this. We must ever crucify this flesh with its passions and lusts, and not cherish it; we must mortify it by fasting, by watchfulness, prayer, work; and exercise the soul by reading the Word of God, by pious meditation and prayer.

I feel bright, warm, and tranquil, when I turn with my whole soul to the mental sun, the Sun of righteousness, to Christ my God. Then the ice of my heart melts, all its darkness, impurity, and corruption, vanish; spiritual death flees, heavenly life reigns in its stead, and nothing earthly occupies me any longer.

"Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."[1] The holy, Divine, most heavenly Christian faith requires a pure heart in order that it may act beneficially upon man's whole being, for it cannot dwell and produce beneficial changes in an impure heart if the man does not correct himself of his vices. This is also why, in Christianity, many are called, but few are chosen. Many call themselves Christians, but few are really such; few bring forth the fruits of the Kingdom of God; this is why, even amongst Christians, there are so many atheists, free-thinkers; so many who are superstitious, covetous, sensualists, fornicators, drunkards, thieves, and so on. It is not the fault of the religion that some Christians are such, but it is those who bear the Name of the

[1] 1 Timothy iii. 9.

Christ that are guilty in their carelessness for their religion and its rules, in their impurity and attachment to earthly things, owing to which they cannot find room in their impure hearts for the purest heavenly treasure—the faith of Christ—and are lost at the very source of salvation. Woe unto us, ungrateful, evil-natured, sophistical, vain, sensual, and slothful creatures! Lord, what shall we do? Conquer us by Thy mercy, by Thy love, by Thy great wisdom; destroy the subtility of our flesh, vanquish our malice by the power of Thy goodness!

Every man on earth is sick with the fever of sin, with the blindness of sin, is overcome by the fury of sin; and as sins mostly consist in malice and pride, it is necessary to treat everyone who suffers from the malady of sin with kindness and love. This is an important truth, which we often forget. We often, very often, act in opposition to this truth; we add malice to malice by our anger, we oppose pride to pride. Thus, evil grows within us and does not decrease; it is not cured, but rather spreads. Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon mankind!

It was through the eating of the forbidden fruit in Paradise that mankind acquired the cruel sickness of the soul, attachment to this transitory life, to earthly blessings and pleasures, that most destructive division of the heart between God and the world, between good and evil. And as earthly blessings cannot satisfy the soul, created for delighting in spiritual, eternal, infinite blessings, and they are not equally distributed amongst all—so that through passion or blind attachment some gain possession of very many of them, whilst others have very few, and some even, none at all—therefore, from this proceeds eternal sin, enmity and death for possession; hence the envy and ill-feeling between separate individuals and nations, hence wars and bloodshed, hence the luxury of some and the extreme poverty of others, the surfeiting of some and hunger of others, the seeking for conspicuous, advantageous places by some and the oppression of others, hence thefts, extortion, and every kind of evil. This is what the eating of the forbidden fruit has done; it has occasioned so much evil that it is impossible to escape from it. And if the Son of God had not been incarnated, and had not suffered and died for our salvation, then all mankind would have remained in endless, inconsolable, and unimaginable woe; for all would have been lost in their sins, and everlasting wailing and gnashing of teeth in hell, without any hope of salvation, would have been their lot, to which everlasting torments impenitent sinners are even now doomed.

Being occupied with vanity and vain pleasures, you have neither the time nor the desire to penetrate into the spirit of the Christian religion, of the Christian Divine Service, and to know the rules of the Church, the purpose of the festivals of the Orthodox Church, of the fasts, and, in particular, the signification of every week of the great Lent, or of the historical reminiscences connected with each week. You sometimes know by heart a play that is given at a theatre, of how many acts or scenes it consists, what are its contents in general and in particular; yet you do not know the essence of the sacraments, although they give eternal life, and the unspeakable blessings of that life to those who receive them worthily. You do not know the essence of the Divine Service of the holy Orthodox Church—your Mother, who nourishes, warms, purifies, sanctifies, and strengthens you upon her holy, maternal bosom. You do not know the nature and signification of the Evening and Morning Services, nor the Liturgy, the usual psalm-singing, the readings and rites of the Church. Some people justify play-acting, and call it instructive and moral, or harmless, or at least a lesser evil in comparison with drunkenness and profligacy; and with this object they endeavour to organise theatrical performances everywhere. It is wonderful that Christians have not found any better way of spending their precious time than the theatre, which both by its origin and meaning preserves, even up to now, a heathenish, idolatrous character; a character of vanity, frivolity—a character showing in itself, in general, the fullest reflection of all the passions and deformities of this world: of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and of the pride of life; and only seldom, very seldom, represents the valour of the sons of their country, and even then, of course, of an earthly country, and not of the heavenly one. Everything heavenly, holy, bearing the stamp of Christianity, is foreign to the theatre; and if it does sometimes appear on the stage, then it is made the subject of ridicule. The very name of God, terrible to every creature, is only pronounced there heedlessly, with derision and scoffingly; the sacred calling—for instance, the monastic calling, the angelic calling—is turned into ridicule; the respect for authorities, for parents, and the clergy is prejudiced when any reprehensible actions of such persons are publicly turned into ridicule, and this before the whole of society, before thoughtless young people, even before children, to whom the names of their parents and superiors ought to be sacred. One disrespectful or unbecoming word concerning their elders is sometimes sufficient to prejudice the respect due to them. Have Christians become so thoughtless that they can find no better means of spending their precious time than in the theatres, for which they leave even the God's temple, the Divine Service? And the precious festival time, given by God for instruction in the

Holy Scriptures, in salutary reflections, and in virtuous actions, they fritter away in laughter and stupid applause in the theatres. No; say what you like, theatres are an ungodly institution. Only penetrate into their spirit and you will agree that they are schools of incredulity, mockery, of the insolent ridicule of everything, and that they are depravity. Woe unto that society in which there are many theatres, and which loves to frequent them! Occasionally, it is true, the theatre is the lesser evil for those who love evil. Lend an ear to popular opinion, to the opinion of those who have visited the theatre many times; they do not hesitate to say that theatres lead to depravity. Only the blind, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not,"[1] say that a theatre is moral. No; Christians ought to perseveringly study their religion; they ought to read the Gospel more frequently, to study the Divine Service, to fulfil the commandments and the rules of the Church; to read the writings of the Holy Fathers, religious publications, in order to become imbued with the spirit of Christianity, and to live in a Christian manner. Such should be your occupations and recreations.

O how bitter were my sins to Thee, Christ, my God and my Saviour, when Thou wast buffeted, scourged, spit upon; when Thy head was pierced with thorns and Thou wast nailed to the cross for my sake; when Thou hungest on the cross, in unspeakable torments, to save me from the most bitter, unspeakable torments of hell! But I ought to call to mind more frequently this Thy self-exhaustion, these Thy sufferings, in order not to commit sin, and to zealously fulfil all virtue in order to love Thee with all my heart, to fulfil Thy saving commandments. Meanwhile, I often forget this awful sacrifice, offered for me by the Only Begotten, unoriginate, co-eternal Son of the Heavenly Father. Grant unto me then, Lord, a pure heart and unchangeable repentance, leading to salvation; grant that I may find favour in Thy sight during the remainder of my life!

"Have you often called upon Me sincerely in prayer?" says God to the sinner. "Have you often thanked Me with a sincere heart for Mine innumerable benefits, surpassing every imagination? Have you often offered Me the sincere sacrifice of praise in order that I might again and again pour upon you My mercies? But what shall I do with your depravity, with your corruption, with your perverted mind and heart, with your will, hourly inclined to evil and vice!" "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."[2] "Thus, do not be cast down, you who are reproved,

[1] 2 Corinthians iv. 4. [2] Hebrews xii. 6.

chastened by Me, but endure." "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."[1]

The celebration of the Divine Liturgy requires an elevated soul, or a man with an elevated soul, not bound by any worldly passions, desires, and attachments to earthly delights; whose heart is wholly embraced by the flame of the Holy Ghost, by ardent love for God and mankind, for every human soul, and, above all, for the Christian soul, so that with a sincere heart he may ever rise to God in prayer: "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?"[2] This fire was sent down from heaven upon the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire. This fire is also necessary for us, for our frozen hearts, in order to warm, soften, to melt them again and again, to continually cleanse them, in order to enlighten and renew them. Where is there to be found such a worthy priest who, like the Seraphim, would burn before the Lord with love, praise, and gratitude for His marvels of mercy and wisdom manifested unto us and within us? I am the greatest of sinners in unworthily celebrating this most heavenly Sacrament, for I have ever an impure heart, bound by desires and attachments to earthly delights. Lord, Thou seest the depths of our hearts; but "Thou shalt purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; Thou shalt wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."[3] "It is not wonderful if Thou hast mercy upon the pure; and it is not a great thing if Thou savest the righteous, but show the wonders of Thy mercy upon me, a sinner!"[4]

Lord! I thank Thee with my whole heart for having saved me an innumerable multitude of times from the shamefulness, violence, and cruelty of the passions, and for having quenched in me the fiery arrows of the evil one, and for having guarded my soul with peace, refreshing it with the dew of Thy grace. Glory to Thee, most merciful and Almighty, that by Thy grace I still remain whole and unharmed, in spite of the innumerable wiles of the invisible and most evil enemies endeavouring to devour me! I believe and know that Thou, Lord, wilt deliver and save me from all their snares and calumnies by ways known unto Thee, and wilt grant Thy heavenly kingdom to me, and not to me only, but to all those who live piously and are subjected to the calumnies of the spirits of evil; for to Thee it appertains to be merciful and to save those who desire to be saved, and

[1] Hebrews xii. 11. [2] St. Luke xii. 49.
[3] Psalm li. 7. [4] Evening Prayer of St. John Damascene.

even those who do not desire to be saved. "Save me," it is said, "whether I wish or do not wish to be saved."[1]

"Let us pray to the Lord for the salvation of our souls."[2] He who sincerely watches over himself continually notices that our soul is destroyed by various sins, sleeps the deadly sleep of sin, is continually taken captive by the Devil, is bound by the strong fetters of the passions; he notices this and sighs, and prays fervently to the Lord for the salvation of the souls redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Thus our souls are daily destroyed by malice, envy, harsh judgment, covetousness, love of pleasure, gluttony and drunkenness, fornication, slothfulness and negligence, despondency and murmuring ignorance, impure language, idle speaking, frivolity, free-thought, rebellion, insolence, self-will, and other passions. We pray for "the peace from above, for there is no rest [peace] in our bones because of our sins."[3]

By means of its Divine service, the Orthodox Church educates us for heavenly citizenship, by teaching us every virtue, exemplified by the lives of the Mother of God, and of all the Saints, by purifying, sanctifying, and making us godly through the sacraments, and by giving "unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness."[4] Therefore, it is urgently necessary for us to frequent intelligently, reverently, and willingly the Divine services especially on the festivals, and to take part in the sacraments of penitence and Holy Communion. But those who withdraw themselves from the Church and the Divine services become the victims of their passions and are lost.

With what maternal, or rather Divine love the Church as though daily carries us in her arms, unceasingly raising to the Lord prayers for us all—in the evening, at midnight, in the morning, and about mid-day. She teaches us, cleanses us, sanctifies us, heals and strengthens us through the sacraments, guides us by every means in the tenderest and gentlest manner to salvation and eternal life. Blessed are those priests and ministers who understand this love and this care of the Church for the salvation of her children, and endeavour to appropriate unto themselves her spirit, to live by this spirit, to breathe by this spirit, both within and without the Church, and to offer prayers and praises, and celebrate the Divine services of the Church with heartfelt attention and reverence, remembering that through all this they save both themselves and their flock!

[1] Evening Prayer of St. John Damascene.
[2] From the Liturgy.
[3] Psalm xxxviii. 3.
[4] 2 Peter i. 3.

What a grand creature is man—what a wonderful creation of God, created after His own image! If even in a fallen state he is capable of accomplishing the many wonderful works which he has produced and still produces, as we constantly see, both in history and in the present time, then of what might he not be capable in a state of holiness and perfection! But that which in him is above all deserving of attention, wonder, reverence, and the most heartfelt gratitude is that he may be likened to his Creator—God; that he is predestined to immortality, to eternal bliss in God, and with God; that he will some day shine forth, like the sun, in the kingdom of his heavenly Father. The Lord, foreseeing this glory of His faithful chosen ones, says: "Then [at the second coming] shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."[1]

During the oblation, the whole Church, in Heaven and upon earth—the Church of the first-born, inscribed in the heavens, and the Church militant, fighting against the enemies of salvation upon earth—is typically represented assembled around the Lamb, who took upon Himself the sins of the world. What a great spectacle, enrapturing and moving the soul! Is it possible that I too am among this assembly of saints; that I too am redeemed by the Lamb of God; that I too am the joint heir with the saints, if I remain faithful to the Lamb until death? Are not all my brethren too members of this heavenly holy assemblage, and joint heirs of the future kingdom? O, how widely my heart should expand in order to contain all within itself, to love all, to care for all, to care for the salvation of all as for mine own! This is wisdom and the highest wisdom. Let us be simple; let us walk in simplicity of heart with all. Let us remember our high calling and election, and let us continually aspire to the honour of God's heavenly calling through Christ Jesus. "We are the children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."[2]

Do not observe the sins of others, and do not behave inimically, inwardly or outwardly, towards those who sin, but represent to yourself your own sins, and heartily repent of having committed them, considering yourself in reality worse than all. Pray lovingly for those who sin, knowing that we are all inclined to every sin.

A true Christian behaves in this life so that it may be a preparation for the future one, and not only a life here

[1] St. Matthew xiii. 43. [2] Romans viii. 16, 17.

below. In his actions he does not think what will be said of him here, but of what will be said there in Heaven; he represents to himself that he is always in the presence of God, of the angels and all the saints, and remembers that some day they will bear witness of his thoughts, words, and deeds.

By my love for God and my neighbour I belong to heaven, I am heavenly; whilst by worldly cares, especially by worldly attachments, I belong to the earth, I am earthly, devilish. "Lord and Master of my life, grant unto me, Thy servant, the spirit of love." [1]

Love. With love for God and your neighbour in your heart you will possess all things and will lack nothing; for where love is, there is God; and God is everything to us, and chiefly our life, peace, sweetness, and blessedness. It is strange and pitiable to see through what vain causes the Devil deprives us of love for God and our neighbour: through earthly dust, in the strict sense of the word—the countless dust which we trample under feet: through money, food, and drink, dress, houses, honours, through all these things which pass away, together with their mother, the earth, and with our own much cared for bodies, which are also nothing but dust.

Remember the Love that laid down His life for men, and do not spare your very life itself for your brother, but unmercifully crucify your carnal man, who turns you away from sacrificing yourself for your brother.

Greedy, covetous miser! is it money, is it bread that has given you life? Is it not God? Is it not His word which gave being and life to you and all other creatures? Does not the Son of God uphold "all things by the word of His power?" [2] Do money and bread, water and wine alone support your life? Does not man live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"? [3] Are not money and bread mere dust? Is not bread the least of the things necessary for supporting our life? Everything was created and is supported by the word. The word is the source and preservation of life.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—God in the Trinity—is glorified by all His creatures, by the angelic assemblies unceasingly singing the Thrice Holy hymn, and by

[1] Prayer of St. Ephraem the Syrian.
[2] Hebrews i. 3. [3] St. Matthew iv. 4.

the holy Church of Christ, the holy apostles, martyrs, prelates, reverend fathers, the righteous, and all the saints—by the whole visible world, by all living Christians, by the whole world. The truth of the Trinity of the Godhead surrounds us upon all sides, like the air that we breathe, and with which we are wholly penetrated. Is it possible, after this, to have any doubt in the Divinity of the Son, or of the Holy Ghost? How many works do we see accomplished in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost? How many powers of the Holy Ghost have we experienced, and still experience upon ourselves? The Holy Ghost is the spiritual air of reasonable creatures. What ordinary air is in relation to physical bodies, such is the Holy Ghost to reasonable and free creatures. He fills, enlivens, and enlightens them, endues them with wisdom, and strengthens them. The Son of God is to us "the way, the truth, and the life;"[1] the rest—("I will give you rest"[2]); the joy—("I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice.")[3] We have experienced and experience this in ourselves. Shall we listen, after this, to him who would suggest the contrary? Is it not the inward whispering of the evil spirit, of that dark spirit breathing falsehood, malice, despondency, straitness, and fire, which vanishes like smoke or dust at the name and before the cross of the Lord? Shall we listen to this dreamer, and shall we be disturbed by his snares? Be firmly assured that he is the complete denial of truth. "If I should say I know Him [the Father] not, I shall be a liar unto you; but I know Him."[4] The mere fact that he always destroys the soul proves that he is falsehood, death, and not truth, not life. We only know of one cause of death—the Devil. Amen.

If we call upon the saints with faith and love, then they will immediately hear us. The faith is the connecting element on our part, and love on theirs, as well as ours; for they are in God, and we are in God, Who is Love.[5]

Why is long-continued prayer necessary? In order that by prolonged, fervent prayer we may warm our cold hearts, hardened in prolonged vanity. For it is strange to think, and still more so to require, that the heart, hardened in worldly vanity, could be speedily penetrated during prayer by the warmth of faith and the love of God. No; labour and labour, time and time are needed to attain this. "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it

[1] St. John xiv. 6. [2] St. Matthew xi. 28. [3] St. John xvi. 22.
[4] St. John viii. 55. [5] 1 John iv. 16.

by force."[1] The Kingdom of Heaven does not soon come into the heart when men themselves so assiduously flee from it. The Lord Himself expresses His will that our prayers should not be short, by giving us for an example the importunate widow who often came to the judge and troubled him with her requests.[2] Our Lord, our Heavenly Father knows, even before we ask Him, what things we have need of,[3] what we want; but we do not know Him as we ought, for we give ourselves up to worldly vanity, instead of committing ourselves into the hands of our Heavenly Father. Therefore in His wisdom and mercy He turns our needs into a pretext for our turning to Him. "Turn ye, My wandering children, even now unto Me, to your Father, with your whole hearts. If before you were far from Me, even now, at least, warm by faith and love to Me your hearts which were formerly cold."

Worthy, sincere, and reverent service to the Lord in the temple, accompanied by lively faith, is a source of peace, joy, and blessedness to our souls. Thus a reverent priest celebrating the services, the sacraments, and the reading of the prayers, in his very duty itself finds the highest delight and blessedness for himself.

The Word of the Lord is deed, life, being. From Him Who exists comes existence; from the Life, life; from the Truth, truth; whilst from the Devil, who fell through his illusive pride, who wished to appropriate to himself the impossible, and who fell away from life and truth, come illusion, falsehood, and death from death.

Man, they say, is free; he cannot compel himself, or ought not to force himself, to any religion or instruction. Lord, have mercy upon us! What a diabolical opinion! If they are not forced, then what will become of men after this? What will become of you, the proclaimer of these newly-invented rules, if you do not force yourself to that which is good, and live as your vicious heart, your proud, short-sighted and blind intellect, your sinful flesh, incline you to live? Say, what will become of you? Do you not, then, force yourself, I do not say to good, but even to that which is your duty and is useful? How can one do without forcing oneself? How is it possible not to induce or force Christians, too, to fulfil the precepts of religion and piety? Is it not said in the Scripture that "the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force"?[4] And, especially, how is

[1] St. Matthew xi. 12.
[2] St. Luke xviii. 2-6.
[3] St. Matthew vi. 8.
[4] St. Matthew xi. 12.

it possible not to compel boys to instruction, to prayer? What will become of them? Will they not become idlers and good-for-nothing? Will they not learn every evil?

Concerning modern works of charity. If you enjoy earthly blessings in full measure, and if you give to the needy, but indulge yourself still more, it means that you do good works without the least self-denial. Your works of charity are not great. But what else do we find? What are so-called works of charity? People arrange different entertainments with a charitable object—that is, they intentionally wish before all to serve their sinful flesh, the Devil, and only afterwards their neighbour and God. But this is no charity at all! Such works only bear the name of charity. "Let us do evil, that good may come."[1] "Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger! Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep!"[2]

When you pray to God and ask of Him various blessings —spiritual, heavenly, material, earthly—then, for complete assurance of obtaining that which you ask for, or, in general, the blessing mostly needed by you, in accordance with the wisdom and grace of God, have in your mind and heart the following words of the Saviour:—"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father Which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"[3]

When reading certain truths, do not say: "This is not new; this I know; I said this myself also." All this is diabolical pride. Such a frame of mind savours of the following sophistry: "I know everything, good and evil." It almost signifies: "I am omniscient." And many people do not read sermons and religious books because they think that they know all that is written there—that all that is written there is a repetition of what has been known to them long ago; whilst worldly books, in which, indeed, there is always the one same empty worldly vanity, they read willingly, and sometimes several times over. O, impure flies that feed upon carrion!

The Lord calls all of us to union with His divine nature,

[1] Romans iii. 8. [2] St. Luke vi. 25. [3] St. Matthew vii. 7-11.

and we ought to carefully preserve the unity of the spirit in the union of peace, as members of Christ's body, as members of one another. "For we are members one of another."[1]

After having worthily celebrated the service and the sacraments, always thank the Lord from your whole heart by a short prayer for having found you worthy of serving Him, of serving His most loving intentions and deeds with all your heart, with faith and love; for our service to our Lord, Creator and Redeemer, is the greatest gift and favour to us sinners, always bringing forth good fruit, both in those who receive through us sanctification and salvation from God, and also in ourselves, because it gives us peace, life, and joy. We must always thank God for having designed to make us His sinful and unworthy servants, His fellow-labourers. As the Apostle says: "We are labourers together with God;"[2] the servants and stewards of His Mysteries. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."[3] But meanwhile, what do many of us do? They celebrate the service and sacraments, the reading of the prayers unwillingly, indolently, negligently, hurriedly, with omissions, wishing to finish the holy work quicker, and hasten after worldly vanity. What a fearful temptation, and what a grievous sin! Involuntarily one remembers the terrible word of God to the neglectful fulfillers of His works: "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully!"[4] I said, what a fearful temptation! Yes, it is a fearful temptation, because, through blindness, we treat with neglect the words of the Holy Ghost, breathing in the prayers of the sacraments and services—we treat with neglect that which itself would be the source of the sweetest peace, of joy in the Holy Ghost, and even the source of our own bodily health, did we serve with true zeal and attention; for the words of the prayers connected with the services and sacraments read with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, calmly, with a fervent spirit, have the indubitable and wonderful property of vivifying, strengthening, and healing our body itself together with the soul. This I know from experience. It is a grievous sin, I say, because by celebrating the sacraments carelessly we, through this, mock at the Lord's holy things. What must we do, therefore, in order to celebrate the sacraments and services worthily, attentively, with a fervent spirit? We must always have living faith that our God—worshipped in the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—is ever with us, is looking upon us, and at the first word of our sincere prayer for help

[1] Ephesians iv. 25.
[2] 1 Corinthians iii. 9.
[3] 1 Corinthians iv. 1.
[4] Jeremiah xlviii. 10.

is ready to help us in the holy work; for the prayer of faith, like breathing in relation to our body, is absolutely necessary for us while we live upon the earth. What breathing is to the body, the prayer of faith is to the soul. By remembering that the Almighty is ever with us, and really having Him in our thoughts, and casting away from our hearts all earthly thoughts, doubts, cares, and attachments, we shall always accomplish God's work worthily.

Concerning hypocritical prayer. Did the Pharisees think that they prayed hypocritically? They did not think so; they considered themselves to be right in their hypocrisy itself! It had become their habit; it had become, so to say, their nature; and they thought they were serving God by their prayer. Do the Christian hypocrites of the present day think that they pray and live hypocritically? They do not think so. They pray daily perhaps long; they pray out of habit with their lips, but not with their hearts, without hearty contrition, without a firm desire for amendment, and only in order to fulfil the established rule, and "think" that they do "God service,"[1] whilst by their prayer they only incur the wrath of God. We all more or less sin in praying hypocritically, and shall be greatly censured for this. Humble yourself, consider yourself as the grass, which is nothing in comparison to the ancient oak-trees, or as a prickly thorn, which is nothing, which is worthless in comparison to the fragrant and delicate flowers; for you are indeed grass; you are indeed a prickly thorn, by reason of your passions.

When you give alms to one who begs of you, and who, apparently, is not deserving of, does not require your charity—owing to which your heart grudges him the alms given—repent of this; for the Divine holy Love also bestows His blessings upon us, even when we have a sufficiency of them already. Love for your neighbour ought to say to you, "Even although he has something, still it will do not harm if I add to his prosperity (although, to tell the truth, a few pence will not greatly add to or amend his fortunes). God gives to me, why then should I not give to the needy?" I say to the needy, for who would hold out his hand without need? Had you only received gifts from God in accordance with your merits, you would have been a beggar yourself. God is bountiful to you, not in accordance with your merits, and you yourself wish that He should be bountiful. Why then, having plenty, do you not wish to be generous yourself to your brethren?

[1] St. John xvi. ii.

Look upon everything in this world as upon a fleeting shadow, and do not cling with your heart to anything; do not consider anything in this world great, and do not lay your hopes upon anything earthly. Cling to the One imperishable, invisible, most wise God. "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."[1]

The mode of curing spiritual sicknesses (the passions) entirely differs from the mode of curing of bodily sicknesses. In the latter case, attention must be fixed upon the malady; the tender part must be treated by softening means—warm water, compresses, etc. But it is not so in the case of spiritual sicknesses; so if you have fallen spiritually sick, do not pay attention to it, but strike the malady, crucify it; do not in any wise indulge it, do not cherish it, do not warm it, do quite the reverse to that which it asks you to do. If you feel hatred for your neighbour, crucify this passion quickly, and immediately begin to love your neighbour; if you have fallen into avarice, try to quickly become generous; if you have grown envious, try to quickly become benevolent; if you have fallen into pride, quickly humble yourself to the ground; if you have fallen into covetousness, praise those who are disinterested, and endeavour to become like them; if you are tormented by the spirit of enmity, strive after peace and love; if you are overcome by gluttony, quickly strive to be abstinent and keep fast. The whole art of curing the diseases of the spirit consists in not paying attention to them, and in not in the least indulging them, but in immediately cutting them off.

In reference to the fulfilment of that which you ask of God in prayer, believe that it is as easy, and even incomparably easier, for the Lord to fulfil each of your words than it is for you to pronounce the words, and that if there is the word, there is also the deed; for with the Lord there is no word without the deed; no word shall return unto Him void,[2] according to His word. Remember constantly during prayer that God is That Which Is, and that from Him everything proceeds: both the thought concerning anything, and the word concerning anything and everything—that He is all wise, almighty, and all gracious.

How much people lose during their conversation at home for giving life to it through not speaking about God! How animated, how fruitful and varied their conversation would become through this! Rivers of saving words would flow out

[1] 2 Corinthians iv. 18. [2] Isaiah lv. 11.

of the bellies of believers.[1] How edifying, how soothing such conversation would be! what true bliss it would afford! Whilst now that they do not speak of God in the home circle, but only speak of worldly vanity, the conversation soon becomes exhausted, people soon feel dull, and then kill the precious time in stupid games or dancing. The enemy of mankind has observed this weakness in men to occupy themselves with vain, worldly conversation, and, in general, to spend their time in vain amusements. He has derived and derives an immense advantage from this weakness; he has instituted theatres, circuses—the true realisation of vanity, the true derision of worldly vanity; and foolish persons inclined to vanity, to slothfulness, indolence, willingly frequent these theatres and circuses, not finding any better occupation which would afford tranquillity and pleasure to their souls. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."[2]

You are ill, and your illness is very painful; you have become low-spirited and despondent; you are troubled and tossed with thoughts, each darker than the other; your heart and your lips are ready to murmur, to blaspheme God! My brother! listen to my sincere advice. Bear your illness bravely, and do not merely not despond, but on the contrary, rejoice, if you can, in your illness. You would ask me what there is for you to rejoice at when you are racked all over with pain? Rejoice that the Lord has sent you this temporary chastisement in order to cleanse your soul from sins. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth."[3] Rejoice in the fact that now you are not gratifying those passions which you would have gratified had you been in good health; rejoice that you are bearing the cross of sickness, and that therefore you are treading the narrow and sorrowful way leading to the kingdom of heaven. Maladies in our eyes only appear painful, unpleasant, and terrible. It is seldom that any one of us during the time of sickness represents to himself the profit which his illness brings to his soul; but in God's all wise and most merciful Providence, not a single malady remains without some profit to our soul. Sicknesses in the hands of Providence are the same as bitter medicines for our soul, curing its passions, its bad habits and inclinations. Not a single malady sent to us shall return void. Therefore, we must keep in view the utility of sicknesses, in order that we may bear them more easily and more calmly. "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin,"[4] says the Holy Scripture.

[1] St. John vii. 38.
[2] Ecclesiastes i. 2; xii. 13.
[3] Hebrews xii. 6.
[4] 1 Peter iv. 1.

The Lord's love is greater than a mother's love. My mother bore me in her womb, and by God's ordering gave me birth. Afterwards she nourished me, fondled me, and carried me in her arms. When I was able to walk by myself she left off carrying me in her arms, and still earlier she ceased to feed me at her breast; whilst the Lord always, so to say, carries me in His bosom: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me," says He, "and I in him";[1] or "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."[2] He always carries me in His arms: "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me,"[3] "Upholding all things by the word of His power."[4] He is my power, my sweetness and my joy, the light of my mind and my heart. He constantly nourishes me with the many various products of the earth, as a mother nourishes her child. He is my "strong food and inexhaustible drink."[5] Our parents leave us and we them when we grow up, for it is said: "A man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife,"[6] either in the literal sense of the words, or figuratively, to Christ, which is the highest and holiest love, greater than that of a loving wife; whilst the Lord, from the beginning of our existence until our death, does not leave us for a moment—"continually before Me,"[7] every moment providing for us as a bird provides for her young ones. He is our hope even in death; He is our life after death; He is our consolation at His judgment. He will not cover us with shame even then,[8] and will lead us into the eternal mansions of the heavenly kingdom.

My brothers and sisters who are preparing for Holy Communion![9] let us fear hardened insensibility to our sins; let us fear the pride of our hearts, which says: "I do not need any forgiveness of sins; I am not guilty, I am not sinful"; or else: "My sins are trifling, they are only human ones"—as though it were necessary that they should be diabolical; or: "I do not feel amiss living in my sins." This is the pride of Satan, and it is Satan himself speaking these words in our hearts. Let us feel deeply, deeply, with our whole hearts, our innumerable iniquities; let us sigh for them from the very depths of our souls; let us shed tears of contrition for them, in order to propitiate to mercy the Master, Whom we have angered. Let us not in the

[1] St. John vi. 56. [2] Revelation iii. 16. [3] Isaiah xlix. 16.
[4] Hebrews i. 3. [5] Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus.
[6] St. Matthew xix. 5. [7] Isaiah xlix. 16.
[8] Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus.
[9] It is the custom of the Orthodox Church for her members to set aside a week, generally during one of the Lents, for preparation to receive the Holy Communion, during which time they fast, attend the daily services of the Church, and abstain from worldly matters as far as possible.

least justify ourselves like the Pharisees, the hypocrites: "For in Thy sight," it is said, "shall no man living be justified;"[1] and we can only propitiate God to be merciful unto us by sincere repentance for our sins. Let us put aside indifference and coldness; let us labour unto the Lord with a fervent spirit. Do not let us forget that we have now come to propitiate the Master of our lives and our righteous Judge for a long period of our sinful lives. Is this, therefore, a time for any coldness and indifference, which are not approved of even in social intercourse, in our relations with our fellow-men? Ought not our soul, on the contrary, to be turned into a spiritual fire, and pour itself forth in tears of most heartfelt repentance? O, my God, my God! our iniquities have literally increased beyond the number of the hairs of our heads, above the number of the sand of the sea, and yet we do not feel them, we are indifferent to them; we even do not cease to love them. "If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"[2] Grant, Lord, unto us all a contrite spirit and a humble heart, so that we may offer to Thee true penitence. Amen.

When your faith in the Lord, either during your life and prosperity, or in the time of sickness and at the moment of quitting this life, grows weak, grows dim from worldly vanity or through illness, and from the terrors and darkness of death, then look with the mental eyes of your heart upon the companies of our forefathers, the patriarchs, prophets, and righteous ones—St. Simeon, who took the Lord up in his arms, Job, Anna the Prophetess, and others; the Apostles, prelates, venerable Fathers, martyrs, the disinterested, the righteous, and all the saints. See how, both during their earthly life and at the time of their departure from this life, they unceasingly looked to God and died in the hope of the resurrection and of the life eternal, and strive to imitate them. These living examples, which are so numerous, are capable to strengthen the wavering faith of every Christian in the Lord and in the future life. Those Christian communions who do not venerate the saints and do not call upon them in prayer lose much in piety and in Christian hope. They deprive themselves of the great strengthening of their faith by the examples of men like unto themselves.

When your spirit is dejected during sickness, and begins to represent to you the terrors of death, then tranquillise and comfort your troubled, trembling, and sorrowful heart by the following words: "Thou, O Lord, in the depths of Thy wisdom and love to men, orderest everything and givest unto all

[1] Psalm cxliii. 2. [2] Psalm cxxx. 3.

everything that is profitable for them," and believe that He will unfailingly order everything for your good, whether it be life, sickness, misfortune, sorrow, or death, so that you could not even desire better. Do not say: "It is early for me to die. I would have wished to live a little longer for the glory of God. for the advantage of my relatives and neighbours. I should have liked to look a little longer upon the world, to enjoy earthly blessings." Be thankful to God for having enjoyed up till now His blessings, favours, and bounties. Now submit to His will, to His call, but at the same time do not despair of the continuation of your earthly life.

Through faith and love, through the prayer of faith and love, I can include both God and men in my heart. How deep and vast is the human heart! How great is man!

A true shepherd and father of his flock will live in their grateful memory even after his death. They will extol him; and the less he cares to be extolled here on earth on account of his zealous labours for their salvation, the more his glory shall shine after his death: even when he is dead he will make them speak of him. Such is the glory of those who labour for the common good.

You are a being who has fallen of your own free will, corrupted by sins; this ought to be the most powerful incentive for you to prayer. You daily receive the greatest mercies from God; this ought to be a powerful incentive to thank God. You daily contemplate the works of the omnipotence, wisdom and goodness of God; this ought also to be an incentive to daily praise.

On the manifestation of the pride of Satan in men.—Pride generally shows itself chiefly in the fact that the man who is infected with it makes himself equal to all, or at any rate to many, who are his superiors in age, power, abilities, and cannot bear to be considered beneath them. If a proud man is a subordinate, he does not respect his chief as he ought, does not like to salute him, does not respect his orders, but fulfils them unwillingly, only out of fear. He makes himself equal to all educated people, and does not acknowledge anyone's superiority over himself, or only acknowledges the superiority of a very, very few indeed. If he is a learned or even an unlearned son, he does not pay due respect to his parents and benefactors, especially those who are simple and rough, considering them equal to or even lower than himself. You must take the utmost care not to compare yourself with others in any respect,

but always to put yourself below others, although you may really be better or equal to others in some respects. Everything good in us comes from God and is not our own. "And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."[1] "All these worketh that One and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will."[2] And how can we be proud of the good that does not belong to us and equal ourselves to those who have been placed by God and general confidence higher than us? "Therefore, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden. For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."[3]

When we speak of the God of glory, of His will, of His law, then we must entirely forget our own glory and be completely absorbed in the contemplation of the glory of God or of His most wise, all-gracious will. At such times we should not think of our own imperfections, which the Devil puts into our mind and feeling in order to lower us in our own eyes and to plunge us into false shame, despondence, and despair. We must remember that there is no perfection in anything upon earth, nor in any earthly glory: "For we know in part, and we prophesy [preach] in part."[4] And he who is ashamed and blushes for his imperfection is ashamed of a phantom, appearing to him in his own imagination, and is proud of his imaginary perfections.

I have seen and heard men relate maliciously and malevolently the dark spots in the life and activity of great and even holy men, and condemn, on account of such imaginary or real dark spots, the whole life of such men, calling them hypocrites and almost apostates. They will even present to you facts; only these facts are as dark and doubtful as their own suspicious, cunning souls, which would like to find an imaginary justification for their own vicious deeds in the spots, sins, and weaknesses of others. But such people do not justify themselves, but only increase their own condemnation by beholding the mote in their brother's eye and judging him, not considering the beam (truly a beam) in their own eye.[5] You say: "There are such and such sins in this holy father, or in that pious man." What of that? He is a man, and no man is sinless. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."[6] Are you yourself sinless? If not, then why do you cast the stone of condemnation at your brother? If I were to examine your life, in accordance with the

[1] Ephesians ii. 8, 9.
[2] 1 Corinthians xii. 4, 11.
[3] St. Luke xiv. 8; xviii. 14.
[4] 1 Corinthians viii. 9.
[5] St. Matthew vii. 3.
[6] 1 John i. 8.

Word of God, I should convict you by your own words of innumerable and grievous sins: of pride, presumption, unbelief, love of money, adultery, and of the misinterpretation of the Word of God and of God's commandments, of coldness to your faith, and of what not besides. I should perhaps find that the whole of your body is dark, because the eye of your heart is evil. O, how revolting to me is this devilish rejoicing at the sins of your neighbour, these infernal endeavours to prove their real or imaginary weaknesses! And yet people who act thus dare to say that they respect and strive with all their might to fulfil the commandment concerning love for God and their neighbour! What sort of love is it, when they intentionally wish to see and find dark spots even in great and holy persons—when they blacken the whole life of such persons for a single sin, and do not wish to hide their neighbour's sin, if, indeed, it really exists? Have they forgotten that "charity endureth all things"?[1] What an amount of evil these moral worms do themselves and others! They prejudice the lawful respect of others for a renowned person, darken his light for them, hinder them from imitating him, and trouble their minds with thoughts of condemnation; and harm themselves, too, by receiving from the Devil the poison of judging their neighbour. Brother! "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."[2]

Having invoked the Holy Ghost upon the Holy gifts lying before you, and having sanctified them by the prayer of consecration (during the Liturgy), remember that heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of the Lord shall not pass away;[3] and that the bread and wine have absolutely changed into the Body and Blood of the Lord, by the will of the Lord Himself and by the operation of the Holy Ghost, even if the officiating priest should be unworthy through any infirmity.

Concerning forcing ourselves to all that is good.—"The kingdom of heaven," it is said, "suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."[4] Therefore it is necessary to continually force ourselves to truth and goodness; when praying, we must every moment force ourselves to pronounce each word with power, truly from the heart. In case of negligence, inattention to our heart, of our not forcing ourselves to sincerity, the prayer will be hypocritical, false, and impious; we must say the words of the prayer persuasively to ourselves. If the words of the prayer are persuasive to our own selves, then they will also be persuasive to God; but without persuading yourself do not think to persuade

[1] 1 Corinthians xiii. 7.
[2] Romans xiv. 4.
[3] St. Matthew xxiv. 35.
[4] St. Matthew xi. 12.

God by your prayer to grant you any blessing you ask for. God will grant us according to our own heart:[1] the more sincerity, the more heartfelt fervour we have when praying, the more bountiful will be the gift.

Remember, man, that you are morally and physically nothing: morally because you are wholly sin, passion, infirmity; physically, because your body is earthly dust. In order to manifest their humility before God in a lively and evident manner, people in the olden times, and even some people in the present time, express this by sprinkling ashes upon their heads and laying aside their gay apparel, which feeds vanity and pride in the immortal human spirit. Remember, therefore, man, that even the smallest good in you comes from God, just as the smallest current of air within you or which you breathe comes from the air surrounding you.

Glory to the most Holy, consubstantial and life-giving Trinity! When the Devil oppresses me with displeasure or hatred against my neighbour for any worldly, carnal reason, and I feel distressed and tormented, I rise up, and lifting the eyes of my heart to the Holy Trinity, I say: "Father, Son, and most Holy Spirit, have mercy upon me," whilst I myself look upon the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost as upon the very substance of the most Holy Trinity, essentially present everywhere, even in a single word, and immediately I feel easy, and the enemy flees before the Almighty, everlastingly worshipped Name, and vanishes like smoke. "Glory to Thee, most Holy, consubstantial, life-giving, and undivided Trinity."[2] Most Holy Trinity! teach me how to despise all earthly things, teach me to lay my peace, satisfaction, and blessedness in Thee alone! And in order that I may not be puffed up on account of the merciful attention of the most Holy Trinity to me, and of the salvation granted unto me, may I remember that the Holy Trinity is mercifully attentive to every worm, to every little bird! Let me also remember that some Christians who have done many mighty works in the name of God will some day hear from the Lord the words: "Depart from Me, I know you not,"[3] on account of their un-evangelical life. Most Holy Trinity! preserve me from pride, and teach me humility! Thou hearest me and savest me, mercifully and speedily. I may become proud through such mercy. I may turn Thine infinite goodness and mercy into a pretext for self-praise, as though I myself were worthy of such attention, as though I had done some good. Protect me, most Merciful Trinity, Father, Son,

[1] Psalm xx. 4. [2] Exclamation at the beginning of Matins.
[3] St. Matthew vii. 23; xxv. 12.

and Holy Ghost, "under the cover of Thy wings," from every sin.

When you pronounce to yourself in your heart the name of God, of the Lord, or that of the most Holy Trinity, or of the Lord God of Sabbaoth, or of the Lord Jesus Christ, then in that Name you have the Lord's whole being : in it is His infinite mercy, His boundless wisdom, His inaccessible light, omnipotence, and immutability. Approach this all-creative, all-keeping, and all-ruling Name in your thoughts and heart with the fear of God, and with faith and love. This is why God's commandment strictly forbids us to use God's name in vain, because His name is Himself, one God in three Persons, an incomplex Being, represented and contained in one single word, although at the same time He is not contained or limited either by it or by anything that exists.

This present life is not a jest nor a plaything, although men have turned it into a jest and a plaything. They heedlessly play with time, given for preparation for eternity ; they play with idle words. They assemble at their friends', sit and talk idly, and then begin to play at something. They go to theatres, and there both the performers and the spectators only amuse themselves. Others amuse themselves with their mental gifts, with human infirmities or virtues, with the capability of speaking or writing well. Some even amuse themselves with food and drink, using them in excess instead of only using them for satisfying the necessities of hunger and thirst. Some amuse themselves with their clothes, with their faces ; they amuse themselves with their children, instead of educating them in faith, piety, and the fear of God. Their whole life is an amusement. But woe unto those who thus amuse themselves !

O, how fearful it is to use food and drink for amusement, to eat and drink in excess ! A full stomach makes a man lose faith and the fear of God, and makes him unfeeling in prayer, thanksgiving, and praise to God. A satiated heart turns away from the Lord, and becomes as hard and unfeeling as a stone. This is why the Saviour carefully warns us against surfeiting and drunkenness : " And so that day come upon you unawares," [1] because of the wrath of the Lord upon us for heedlessly and idly spending the time in eating and drinking.

In proportion as a man gratifies his sensuality, he becomes carnal, and drives away from himself the most Holy Spirit of God, Who cannot dwell in those who lead a carnal life. " What

[1] St. Luke xxi. 34.

communion hath light with darkness?"[1] Such a state, worthy of tears, is experienced by very many; but, alas! they do not even recognise that they have not the Spirit of God in them—just the same as a man blind from birth is not conscious of his great loss in not seeing the light. Such men have neither faith nor love in their hearts, nor the spirit of prayer, and they avoid communion with the Church. My God, how many dangers there are in life for me! When I gratify my flesh too much, I become my greatest enemy.

Remember that the celebration of the life-giving Mysteries is the unchangeable assent of the life-giving Trinity, predetermined from the creation of the world: it cannot but be. When you are celebrating the Mysteries, God the Father Himself, by His Holy Ghost, changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ—you are only an instrument. The Father Himself, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, celebrates through you the Liturgy, and consecrates the Holy Gifts. "Thou art He that offerest, and art offered," it is said, "Christ our God."[2] Remember, therefore, the immutability of God and the truth in all His words.

You will only worthily perform the sacrament of penitence when you will be soul-loving and not gain-loving, when you will be patient and not irritable. O, what great love for our neighbours' souls is necessary in order to confess them worthily, patiently, not hurriedly, and without growing angry! The priest who confesses should remember that "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."[3] How zealously he should, therefore, strive to awaken feelings of repentance in those who confess to him, and who sometimes do not even know what to repent of as they ought! The priest should also remember how the Apostle, night and day, with tears warned every one of the newly-enlightened Christians.[4] Every thought of gain in the service of God ought to be entirely thrown aside, trusting to God alone, the soul-lover, for recompense. Question concerning the sins, and teach with firmness and sincerity, and not indolently or with a divided heart. A firm word will call forth firm repentance, will speedily pierce the heart and draw forth tears of emotion and heartfelt contrition; but if the priest does not question firmly concerning the sins, but indolently and insincerely, then his spiritual children also, seeing the indolence and double-mindedness of their spiritual father, are not disposed to confess heartily, sincerely.

[1] 2 Corinthians vi. 14.
[2] Prayer of the Priest at the Liturgy during the Cherubic Hymn.
[3] St. Luke xv. 7, 10.
[4] Acts xx. 31.

Represent to yourself, as far as lies in your power, the omnipotence and the great splendour of the personal Word of God. He speaks, and His word immediately becomes manifold and multifarious existences. He says: "Let there be light," and there is light. He says: "Let there be a firmament," and He makes the firmament. He says: "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place . . . . Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven . . . . Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life," and so on, "and it was so,"[1] according to His word. Thus the voice of a chief, resounding through the air and reaching the soldiers' hearing, moves the troops according to the will of the chief, placing them in various positions, making them perform various evolutions, and attaining through them the fulfilment of his various intentions and purposes. Represent to yourself these masses of created matter. Imagine how the enormous mountains rose up from the earth in accordance with the word of God; what the noise of the waters must have been when they gathered together into oceans, seas, rivers, and sources. Imagine how the air was diffused, how the most varied vegetation suddenly appeared at a single word of the all-creating God. Represent to yourself how the planets appeared and shone, and how they began to perform their infinite revolutions; how the fishes, birds, reptiles suddenly appeared, and, lastly, man. And all these (excepting man) were created from one and the same formless matter, or, to speak more precisely, from only four soulless, formless, inanimate elements. O, does not all this make the mind marvel? "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all!"[2] Thus even now the Master creates everything that He pleases from matter: He says, and it is done. He changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Eucharist.

You are a being endued with speech. Remember that you derive your origin from the word of the Creator of all things, and that in union (through faith) with the creative Word, by means of faith, you can yourself be a material and spiritual creator. Believe that by your faith in the creative word of the Father, your own word, too, shall not return to you vain, powerless (when, for instance, you pray to God, the Benefactor, in accordance with the holy Church's direction or the Lord's guidance), but it shall bring you the gift necessary for good deeds; believe that through faith in the creative Word you will not be unsuccessful in teaching people either in the temple during Divine service, or during the celebration of the sacraments in private houses; neither shall your teaching in schools be unsuccessful,

[1] Genesis i. 3-20. [2] Psalm civ. 24.

but it shall rouse up the minds and hearts of those listening to you.

Remember that the possibility of the deed is contained in the word itself; it is only necessary to have faith in the power of the word in its creative faculty. With the Lord the deed is inseparable from the word. Not a single word addressed to Him shall return void: "For with God nothing shall be impossible."[1] It ought to be the same with us; for we are images of the Word, and the Word is most truly united with us through His incarnation, making us godly and partakers of the Divine nature.

By opening unto others the gates into the kingdom of heaven through baptism, shall we not enter in ourselves? By cleansing others through penitence and absolving them from their sins, shall we not obtain remission of our sins? By uniting others with Christ in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, shall we not ourselves be most truly united with Him "on the nightless day of Christ's kingdom"? By bestowing upon others in the Sacrament of Chrism the strengthening and generative grace of the Holy Ghost, shall we not obtain strength and power ourselves from the most Holy Spirit, and shall we not ourselves grow in spiritual gifts? Truly we firmly hope to receive the promised blessings by the grace, bountifulness, and love to men of God our Saviour. God grant that we may all receive them! Only do not let us become slothful, despondent; do not let us "make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof";[2] but let us hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience,"[3] and let us progress in love for God and our neighbour.

When you doubt in the accomplishment or fulfilment of any word of prayer, remember that the nature of the word is accomplishment, realisation, and that the Holy Ghost, teaching us to pray for anything as we ought,[4] is Himself called the Accomplisher. It is He also Who accomplishes our prayer (accomplished by the Spirit). Remember that the word is power. "With God," it is said, "nothing shall be impossible."[5] The word of the Lord "shall not return unto Him void,"[6] but, like rain or snow, it shall water the earth of our hearts, and shall give seed (the fulfilment) to the sower. Even of men people say: "His word has extraordinary power." You see, therefore, that the word is power, spirit, life.

When you pronounce the powerful commanding, creative

[1] St. Luke i. 37. [2] Romans xiii. 14. [3] 1 Timothy iii. 9.
[4] Romans viii. 26. [5] St. Luke i. 37. [6] Isaiah lv. 11.

words of the Lord Himself, then consider their fulfilment as easy and usual a matter as it is easy and usual for you to breathe or to take, as easy and usual as it is for an infant to be formed in its mother's womb, and even incomparably easier.

In order that you should have steadfast assurance during prayer, of receiving every spiritual blessing from the Lord, believe that by uniting yourself unto the Lord during your prayer you become one spirit with Him,[1] and that God is most gracious, almighty, and most wise. He is all-perfect perfection, therefore you, too, according to your receptivity, according to your faith and love, will become a partaker of His Divine perfections. In the union of your soul with God, do not consider anything impossible or difficult of fulfilment, "for with God all things are possible"[2]—not only the things which you can think of, or are thinking of, but also those which you cannot think of, or which you think of as impossible, for God is an infinite Being, and all His perfections are infinite.

If you doubt of obtaining the blessings you ask of God, then remember at least that even you, being evil and avaricious, and not rich, not almighty, give to those in want who ask of you, and sometimes even before they ask you, when you only know of their need. "How much more shall your Father Which is in heaven," who is most gracious, most rich, most wise and almighty, "give good things to them that ask Him."[3]

The greater the number of persons for whom one asks blessings of the Lord, and the higher are these blessings, the more violently the Devil opposes the priest praying, in order that God should not grant these blessings at his earnest, fervent prayers; for, "According to your faith," it is said, "be it unto you,"[4] and "all things are possible to him that believeth."[5] However, where the snares of the Devil abound, there also the grace of God abounds.

He who prays should remember that if God spared not even His own Only Begotten Son for us sinners, but gave Him for us all, then how will He not give us everything, every imaginable blessing? For if the infinite greatest blessing has been given to us, then will not lesser blessings be also granted unto us? Our Heavenly Father gives us every blessing in Christ. "His Divine power hath given unto us

[1] 1 Corinthians vi. 17. [2] St. Mark x. 27. [3] St. Matthew viii. 11.
[4] St. Matthew iv. 29. [5] St. Mark ix. 23.

all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him."[1]

During prayer, when the Devil violently tempts you, cast all your care upon the Lord, "for He careth for you."[2] During prayer only have faith in the Lord, Who is at your right hand, and all things shall be possible unto you.

When you sin for the fiftieth and hundredth time in the day, and are seized with the most devilish despondency, and despair in God's mercy, say, from the depths of your soul, with Metaphrastes: "I know well, O Lord, that mine iniquities have gone over my head; but I also know that without measure is the multitude of Thy bounties, and unspeakable is the mercy of Thy great goodness, and no sin is there that can overcome Thy loving-kindness. Therefore, O most wonderful King, O Lord most good, do Thou show Thy mercies in me, a sinner; manifest in me the power of Thy goodness and the might of Thy loving-kindness, and receive me who turn to Thee. Accept me as Thou didst the prodigal, the thief, and the sinful woman. Accept me, though in word and in deed, by my evil passions and unreasonable imaginations, I have sinned without measure against Thee. But, O Lord, O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy righteous wrath; neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for, though I am weak, I am also Thy creature. Thou, O Lord, hast established Thy fear in me, and yet I have done evil in Thy sight. O Lord my God, I have put my trust in Thee. If there is any hope of salvation for me, if Thy loving mercy can overcome the multitude of my transgressions, be Thou my Saviour, and, according to Thy goodness and mercy, loosen, remit, and forgive all wherein I have sinned; for my soul is full of trouble and there is no hope of salvation in me. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness; deal not with me according to my sins: but turn, preserve, and deliver my soul from the evils besetting it, and from all its wicked undertakings. Save me for Thy mercy's sake, that where sin abounded Thy grace may much more abound, and I will glorify Thee always, all the days of my life. For Thou art the God of the penitent, and the Saviour of sinners."[3]

Remember that if you do not speak idly during prayer, but say the words of the prayer with feeling, then your words shall not return to you void, without power (like the

[1] 2 Peter i. 3. [2] 1 Peter v. 7.
[3] Fourth Prayer before Communion: composed by St. Simeon the Metaphraste.

husk without the grain), but shall unfailingly bring you those same fruits which are contained in the word, as the fruit is enclosed in the shell. This is a most natural thing, as natural and common as the fruit and its shell in nature. But if you scatter the words to no purpose, without faith, without feeling their power, like the shell without the kernel, then they will return to you empty, in the same way as if you were to scatter the shell, the shell would return to you; but if you scatter seed, the full ears of corn will return to you; and the better, the richer are your seeds, the fuller shall be the ears of corn. It is the same with our prayers: the more sincerely, the more heartily each word is pronounced, the greater will be the fruit of the prayer. Each word, like a grain, shall bring you spiritual fruit, like a ripe ear of corn. Which of those who pray has not experienced this? It was not without reason that the Saviour compared the seed with the word, and the human heart with the ground.[1] The same applies to the words of the prayer. Also, who does not know that the rain moistens the ground and plants and waters them? Likewise, the word of God, and even our own word spoken with faith, shall not return to us without watering our own soul or the souls of others who are obedient and believing. This is just as natural as it is natural for rain to water and fructify the ground and plants, and to assist their growth.

He who becomes irritated against another on account of something material, places a material object above his brother. But what can be higher than man? Nothing on earth is higher.

When you pray, endeavour to pray more for others than for yourself alone, and during prayer represent to yourself vividly all men as forming one body with yourself, and each separately as a member of the Body of Christ and your own member, "for we are members one of another."[2] Pray for all as you would pray for yourself, with the same sincerity and fervour; look upon their infirmities and sicknesses as your own; their spiritual ignorance, their sins and passions, as your own; their temptations, misfortunes, and manifold afflictions as your own. Such prayer will be accepted with great favour by the Heavenly Father, that most gracious, common Father of all, with Whom "there is no respect of persons,"[3] "no variableness,"[4] that boundless Love that embraces and preserves all creatures.

It is a wonderful thing! Our soul, upon coming into

[1] St. Matthew xiii. 5.
[2] Ephesians iv. 25.
[3] Romans ii. 11.
[4] James i. 17.

contact with one who is unbelieving and cold towards God, feels an aversion to him, and the Devil endeavours to turn this just dislike and indignation into a feeling of malice. In order not to cherish malice, and not to serve the Devil by it, we must say to ourselves: "I feel a dislike and coldness towards my brother for his aversion and coldness to God, but I do not feel hatred or malice against him, for I bear with him as my own sick member, and I wish to cure him in meekness, instructing him that opposes himself, 'if God peradventure will give them [him] repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.'[1] If he turns to God, I shall turn to him, also, with heartfelt love; if he becomes compassionate towards others, and does not think of himself alone, of his own advantage and pleasures, then I, too, shall sympathise with him." Besides this, bear lovingly with everybody, and look more upon yourself, what you yourself are; are you not cold and indifferent to God and your neighbour yourself? If so, then there is no reason for you to cast a stone at your brother, when this stone should be directed against yourself.

"God came upon earth in order to raise us up to heaven."[2] It would seem, after this, that even when living upon earth we must live as if in the heavenly kingdom, dwelling there in anticipation by hope. But in reality, for the greater part, the contrary is the case. Men cling with their whole being to the earth and everything earthly. Wherefore? Because our common enemy, the Devil, endeavours with all his might to oppose the intentions of the God-man, Christ. He endeavours to do everything in opposition to what Christ did and does. Christ wishes to raise men up to heaven, and has given them all the means to attain this; whilst the Devil, who himself for his pride was cast down from heaven into the dominions of the air, wishes by every means to attach men to earthly, sensual, transitory things, and, in order to attain this end, he employs the most powerful, most prodigious means. Christ taught us truth; the Devil teaches us falsehood, and strives in every way to contradict every truth; devising various calumnies against it. The Devil endeavours by every means to keep men in error, in the enticement of the passions, in darkness of mind and heart; in pride, avarice, covetousness, envy, hatred, wicked impatience and irritation; in evil despondence, in the abominations of fornication, adultery, theft, false-witness, blasphemy, negligence, slothfulness, and sluggishness.

[1] 2 Timothy ii. 25.
[2] From the Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus.

Bear in your heart continually the words "Christ is Love," and endeavour to love all, sacrificing for the sake of love, not only your possessions, but even yourself.

The root of every evil is a self-loving heart, or self-pity, self-sparing; it is from self-love, or from excessive and unlawful love for oneself, that all the passions proceed: coldness, insensibility, hard-heartedness towards God and our neighbour, wicked impatience or irritability, hatred, envy, avarice, despondency, pride, unbelief, incredulity, greediness after food and drink, or gluttony; the love of money, vanity, slothfulness, hypocrisy. Never pity yourself in anything, crucify yourself—your old man, nestling chiefly in the flesh—and you will strike at the root of all your passions. Bear patiently all that is unpleasant to your flesh; do not spare it, go against it, and you will become a true follower of the Christ. The whole wisdom of a Christian consists in his wisely going against his flesh in everything during his lifetime. "For I know that in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing,"[1] says the Apostle.

The heart of a perfectly healthy man becomes weakened for faith and love to God and his neighbour, and easily gives itself up to carnal desires: to slothfulness, negligence, coldness, gluttony, avarice, fornication, pride; whilst the heart of a sick man, or a wounded, oppressed, weary heart, is strengthened in faith, hope, and love, and is far removed from carnal passions. This is why the Heavenly Father, Who careth for our salvation, chastises us by various sicknesses. The oppression and afflictions of sickness make us turn again to God.

To love your neighbour as yourself, to sympathise with him in his joy and sorrow, to feed, clothe him, if he is in need of food and clothing; to breathe, so to say, the same air with him—look upon all this as the same thing as feeding and warming yourself, and do not count these as virtues or as works of love to your neighbour, lest you grow proud of them. "For we are members one of another."[2]

I marvel at the omnipotence and wisdom of God—how He has created out of the one same earth and water the many and diverse parts of my body: flesh, blood, skin, bones, hair, lungs, liver, veins, eyes, ears, everything. How He set into motion this matter, inert and motionless in itself, and how the regular movements of the blood, juices, and liquids, separation of food, etc., are now uninterruptedly accomplished within me.

[1] Romans vii. 18. [2] Ephesians iv. 25.

Wonderful are Thy works, O Lord, "in wisdom hast Thou made them all."[1] You have no words to declare the wisdom, goodness, and omnipotence of God the Creator and Provider—ask them of the Word of God. And what a variety there is of heavenly and earthly creatures, animate and inanimate, created from the four elements! "Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me, I cannot attain unto it."[2]

I think; but for God to think and to create or change is one and the same thing, because He is That Which Is, an incomplex and almighty Being. Owing to His very incomplexity, everything is possible to Him in a single moment. The Lord has spoken—and this is sufficient for one to believe without any doubt that a certain thing is precisely what He has said. Doubt is impossible. The Godhead would not be Godhead, if It were not almighty. "As for our God, He is in heaven: He hath done whatsoever pleased Him."[3] He wishes, and it is. He wished that water should flow from the rock, and it flowed; He wished that there should be a world out of nothing, and it appeared. His works prove that He is almighty. Come and see.

Try to turn your whole life into service to God; if you are reading anything at home, begin this work by a short fervent prayer that God may teach you and make you wise in faith and piety and in the careful accomplishment of your duties; never read idly, in order to pass the time; by thus doing you lower the word, which should serve entirely for our salvation, and not for idle words, nor as a means for pleasure and spending time agreeably. If you talk to your neighbour, speak reasonably, prudently, instructively, edifyingly; avoid idle speaking as the poison of a serpent, remembering that "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment"[4]—that is, they shall hear the just sentence of the Judge. If you are teaching children, your own or those of others, turn this work into God's service, teaching them zealously, considering beforehand the best means of making the instruction clear, comprehensible, complete (as far as possible), and fruitful. Conquer by the name of the Lord and by the sign of the cross the snares of the enemy, who endeavours to disturb, darken, oppress, and weaken you. Even when you eat, drink, or do anything else lawful, "do all to the glory of God."[5]

In every word is God the Word, an incomplex Being.

[1] Psalm civ. 24. [2] Psalm cxxxix. 5. [3] Psalm cxv. 3.
[4] St. Matthew xii. 36. [5] 1 Corinthians x. 31.

How carefully we must therefore pronounce the words, with what humility, how prudently, in order not to anger God the Word, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost!

My Master, Lord Jesus Christ! my swift, most speedy Intercessor, Who never lettest me be ashamed! I thank Thee from my whole heart for having mercifully heard me when I called unto Thee in my darkness, straitness, and when I was in the flames of the enemy; for having delivered me most speedily, mightily, and graciously from my enemies, and for having given unto my heart graciousness, ease, light! O, my Lord, in what distress I was from the snares of the enemy! how opportunely hast Thou shown me Thy help, and how manifestly and almightily hast Thou succoured me! I glorify Thy mercy, Master, speedy to hear us; Hope of the despairing, I glorify Thee, that Thou hast not let my face be ashamed, but hast mercifully delivered me from the darkness and ignominy of hell. How after this can I ever at any time despair of Thy hearing me and having mercy upon me a sinner? I shall always, always call upon Thy sweetest name, my Saviour; Thou, O incalculable Bountifulness, save me as Thou hast ever done before in Thy immeasurable compassion, for Thy name is Lover of men and Saviour!

Do not believe your flesh when it grows weak and refuses to serve you on the pretence of not being sufficiently strengthened by food. This is a delusion. Overcome it; pray fervently, and you will see that the weakness of your body was false, imaginary, not real: you will see in truth that "men shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."[1] Do not put your trust in bread.

It is said: "Christ on earth, be lifted up."[2] This signifies that he who believes in Christ's coming upon earth, in His incarnation, and in all His loving care for our salvation, does not cling to the earth, but continually raises himself up to heaven in mind and heart; his will continually aspires upwards to God, to heavenly blessings, and is not allured by earthly delights, by earthly splendour, riches, and honours. Unfortunately, we have but little faith in Christ, and try to combine our love for the world with love for Christ, earthly attachments with love for God. These things are incompatible! "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself"[3] of everything he is passionately attached to in the world, and let him hate his own sin-loving soul. (December 24th, 1869.)

[1] St. Matthew iv. 4. [2] First Hirmoi on Christmas Day.
[3] St. Matthew xvi. 24.

My God! how the love and sincere sympathy of our neighbour towards us rejoices our hearts! Who shall describe this blessedness of the heart, penetrated with the feeling of others' love towards me, and my love to others? It is indescribable! If here on earth mutual love so rejoices us, then with what sweetness of love shall we be filled in heaven, when we shall dwell with God, with the Mother of God, with the heavenly powers, with God's saints? Who can imagine and describe such bliss, and what earthly temporal things should we not sacrifice in order to obtain the unutterable bliss of heavenly love? God, Thy name is Love! Teach me true love, strong as death. I have most plenteously tasted its sweetness from my communion in the spirit of faith, in Thee, with Thy faithful servants, and have obtained plenteousness of peace and life through it. Strengthen, O God, that which Thou hast created in me. O, had it ever been thus all the days of my life! Grant that I may oftener be in the communion of faith and love with Thy faithful servants, with Thy temples, with Thy Church, with Thy members!

My sweetest Saviour! having come down from heaven for the service of mankind, Thou didst not only preach the Word of Heavenly Truth in the temple, but Thou wentest through the towns and villages; Thou didst not shun anyone; Thou visitedst the houses of all, especially of those whose fervent repentance Thou didst foresee with Thy Divine gaze. Thus Thou didst not remain sitting at home, but wert in loving intercourse with all. Grant to us, too, to be in such loving intercourse with Thy people, so that we pastors should not shut ourselves up in our houses away from Thy sheep as if in castles or prisons, only coming out of them for services in the church or to officiate in the houses of others, only out of duty, only with prayers learned by heart. May our lips be freely opened to discourse with our parishioners in the spirit of faith and love. May our Christian love for our spiritual children be opened and strengthened by animated, free, and fatherly conversation with them. O what sweetness, what bliss Thou hast concealed, Lord, our boundless Love, in the spiritual converse warmed by love of a spiritual father with his spiritual children! And how is it possible not to strive upon earth with all our might after such bliss? Yet it is only a faint beginning, only a faint likeness of the heavenly bliss of love! Especially love the communion of good works, both material and spiritual. "To do good and to communicate forget not."[1]

When the Devil disturbs you by unbelief in the Holy

[1] Hebrews xiii. 16.

Mysteries, saying, "It is impossible that bread and wine should be the Body and Blood of Christ," say to him, "Yes, it is impossible for you and me—you are right—but not for God; 'for with God all things are possible.'"[1] With God the thought itself is deed. "Said . . . and it was so."[2] He speaks, and it is. Short and clear. And all the worlds stand by the Word of God. "Upholding all things by the word of His power."[3] Do not the feet wish to stand above the body and, strange to say, teach the Creator of all things? Is it possible to doubt in the existence of that of which our own experience and the visible and invisible world assure us? In what does the mystery of the existence of all creatures consist? In the Word of the Creator. "Said . . . and it was so." Everything proceeded from the Word, all the infinite different varieties of creatures from the almighty, most-wise, all-merciful Word of God, not from anything else. Examples are also given to you in the Scriptures as to how rapidly everything was created by the sovereign word of God: the waters were turned into blood at the voice of Moses, the dust of the earth into lice, a rod into a serpent; his hand was covered with leprosy, and then suddenly cured or restored; light was turned into a darkness that might be felt; Moses only stretched forth his hand, and in an instant the Lord changed the substance of things; the land of Egypt was covered with frogs when Aaron stretched forth his hand over the waters at Moses's bidding; again Moses took ashes in his hand and sprinkled it towards heaven, and men and beasts were covered with blains; Moses only stretched forth his rod toward heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail.[4] Come and see. How easy it is for the Lord to create and to change everything! Does not the same Lord act through us priests, and with us as well? The Lord Himself is here, the Lord Who was incarnate for us, and Who is the Mediator and the Accomplisher of all. "For Thou art He that offerest and art offered, and receivest and art distributed."[5] The priest only says the words, stretches forth his hand, and the Lord changes everything.

Remember that the intellect is the servant of the heart, which is our life; if it leads the heart to truth, peace, joy, and life, then it fulfils its destination, it is the truth; but if it leads the heart to doubt, disturbance, torment, despondency, darkness, then it does not fulfil its destination and is absolutely false ("science falsely so called."[6]) If

[1] St. Mark x. 27. [2] Genesis i. 9. [3] Hebrews i. 3.
[4] Exodus iv., vii.-x.
[5] From the Prayer of the Priest at the Liturgy during Cherubic Hymn.
[6] 1 Timothy vi. 20.

the heart feels peace, joy, ease from faith in anything, this is quite sufficient; it is unnecessary, then, to require from the reason proofs of the truth of such an object; it is undoubtedly true the heart asserts it by its life, for the purpose of all investigations is truth and life.

In ministering the sacrament of penitence, one feels one's own most miserable sinfulness before God, and all the misery, ignorance, and sinfulness of human nature. Confession is a cross, truly a cross! O what a debtor before his spiritual children a priest feels himself to be during confession! He truly feels himself to be an insolvent debtor, a debtor guilty before the heavenly truth, and deserving of thousands of the fires of Gehenna! One sees and feels at people's deep ignorance, at their ignorance of the truths of religion, and of their sins, at their stony insensibility, that a confessor must pray for them most fervently, and teach them day and night, early and late! O what ignorance! Some do not even know the Holy Trinity; they do not know who Christ is; they do not know why they live upon earth! And what a multitude of sins! Yet meanwhile we seek enrichment, rest; we dislike labour, we become irritated when there are more of them than usual! We seek spacious abodes, rich clothing! Let us not love earthly rest, let us not become slothful, let us not be negligent in the performance of our spiritual duties, and let us not deprive ourselves of heavenly blessings and rest, for having tested the worldly rest in abundance here, what rest can we look for there?

The most Holy Trinity is the most perfect union of three Persons in one Being, because it is the most perfect equality.

He truly bestows charity who gives from his heart, and with a loving heart. He is truly merciful who converses with everyone heartily, and not only with the intellect and lips, who renders sincere, hearty respect to everyone, who preaches the Word of God and serves God with a true heart, not hypocritically—in a word, who embraces all, and carries all in his heart by love, despising everything material that may become a hindrance to love between himself and his neighbour—such a one is truly merciful.

In order to prevent our corrupt nature from being allured by the temporary sweetness of sin, the Lord has so ordained that the most agreeable sensual pleasures upon which we greedily throw ourselves are injurious to us, both by their nature and through our own greediness and intemperance; such are almost

all dainty dishes, all agreeable drinks, all sensual pleasures. Glory to the mercy and great wisdom of the Heavenly Father, Who uses every means to prevent us from falling into sensuality or the coarse pleasures of sensuality. Who hath spiritual eyes to see and ears to hear all this, let him see and hear.[1] Thus, Christian, the very injuriousness of sensual pleasures which are destructive to our body shows that we are not created and do not live upon earth for them, but for higher, spiritual, and eternal pleasures. And, therefore, my soul, rejoice and find peace in God. This is thy perfect, harmless, true and eternal enjoyment; this thou hast already experienced many times; whilst all earthly pleasures are delusive, injurious, fleeting, and bear in their very origin the germs of corruption the moment we approach them. Suffering and maladies are proofs of this.

Brother, you feel a deadly malice in your heart against your neighbour; you are tormented by evil thoughts from the offences he causes you. Here is a means of saving yourself from inward straitness. Represent to yourself the multitude of your own sins, countless in their number, and vividly imagine how the Master of your life bears with them in you, how He daily and endlessly forgives you your sins if you pray to Him sincerely, whilst you yourself do not wish to forgive your neighbour a few fits of passion excited in him by the Devil. Sigh, weep if you can, at your own foolishness, condemn yourself only, and not in any way your neighbour, and the forgiveness of the Lord will be ready for you. Your inward straitness will vanish like smoke, your thoughts will become clear, your heart will become calm, and you will again walk in freedom of heart. Train yourself to meekness, be as though you did not hear reproaches, calumny, affronts, as if they were heard by somebody quite different, or by your shadow. Do not allow any suspiciousness. "I have walked innocently."[2] "While the ungodly is in my sight I held my tongue and spake nothing: I kept silence."[3] "I became even as a man that heareth not: and in whose mouth are no reproofs."[4]

Christ is the Bread of life, therefore let us lay aside our care about other bread. The God Who gives us the Body and Blood of His Son for our food and drink will likewise give us natural bread. He Who clothes our soul in Christ will likewise give us material clothing. He Who deigns to dwell in us will not deprive us of a perishable dwelling.

To doubt in the Divinity of the Holy Ghost means to doubt

[1] St. Matthew xiii. 9.
[2] Psalm xxvi. 1.
[3] Psalm xxxix. 2, 3.
[4] Psalm xxxviii. 14.

in our own life, for the Holy Ghost gives life, and spiritually feeds all—serves as a spiritual sun, as air, food, and drink to our souls; it means to reject prayer, for we pray through the Holy Ghost; to reject truth and holiness, for the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth and of all holiness; to reject every spiritual consolation and comfort in sorrows and sicknesses, for the Holy Ghost is the true and only Comforter, together with the Father and the Son; to reject faith, for faith is given by the Holy Ghost; to reject hope and love, for hope and love are likewise bestowed upon our hearts by the Holy Ghost: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us"[1]; to reject spiritual and bodily power, for the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of power and strength; to reject wisdom and understanding, the fear of God, our own breathing, for He is the breathing, the air of the soul; in a word, it means to doom ourselves to moral nothingness and destruction. Do not pay attention to doubts in the truth, for they are the breathing of the evil spirit, of the spirit of falsehood—the destroyer; "Ye shall know them by their fruits."[2] Doubt in the truth is always destructive to the soul. Every truth is the breathing of the Holy Ghost: the Word of God, the writings of the Holy Fathers and of the teachers of the Church, the words and works of every pious person who loves the truth.

Love for God and our neighbour, in our present corrupt state is impossible without self-sacrifice; he who wishes to fulfil the commandment concerning love for God and his neighbour, ought to devote himself in good time to great deeds and privations for the sake of those that he loves. (Amen.) "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He (the Christ) laid down His life for us."[3] "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."[4]

God is eternally watchful; and therefore we must always pray to Him with a watchful and sober mind and heart: "Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer,"[5] it is said, and drive away any self-forgetfulness and slothfulness from ourselves. Do not let your prayer evaporate and only dry words remain from it, but let it breathe with the warmth of the Spirit, like moist hot bread, just taken out of the oven.

Many people pray hypocritically, and their hypocritical prayer becomes a habit with them; they do not even observe themselves, and do not wish to observe, that they pray hypocritically, and not in spirit and truth, so that if anybody

[1] Romans v. 5. [2] St. Matthew vii. 16. [3] 1 John iii. 16.
[4] St. John xv. 13. [5] 1 Peter iv. 7.

were to accuse them of praying hypocritically, they would be angry with those who dared to say, in their opinion, such an absurdity. Men do not suddenly become hypocritical, but gradually. At first, perhaps, they prayed with their whole hearts, but afterwards—for always to pray with the whole heart is a difficult work, to which we must force ourselves, and "the kingdom of heaven" (it is said) "suffereth violence"[1]—they begin to pray more with their lips superficially, not from the depths of the soul, which is much easier, and finally at the increased assaults of the flesh and Devil, they only pray with their lips, without the power of the words of the prayer reaching the heart. There are very many people who pray thus. The Lord said of them: "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth and honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."[2] What is said concerning prayer equally applies to the communion of the Holy, immortal, and life-giving Mysteries. At first, a man communicates with lively faith, with a feeling of love and devotion, but afterwards, at the continual opposition of the flesh and the Devil to the truth of God, he lets them get the victory over him and communicates hypocritically, not of the Body and Blood, but in accordance with the thoughts of his heart, of bread and wine. The essence of the Mysteries, "the spirit and life,"[3] as the Saviour said, "hath no place"[4] in him; he is thus inwardly robbed by Satan. May God preserve us all from such communion, from such blasphemy against the Lord! It is the same also with the sacrament of penitence.

Confession is a school of self-denial for a priest. How many occasions there are in it for impatience, irritation, slothfulness, negligence, inattention! It is truly the touchstone of the priest's love for his parishioners. A priest ought not on any account to live in softness and ease, and especially must not indulge himself with sleep and pleasant food and drinks, otherwise the Devil will strike his heart with some passion or other, and will cast him into straitness and prostration. It is necessary to crucify, absolutely to crucify, the flesh. Confession for a priest is a labour of love for his spiritual children; it must be without respect of persons, long-suffering, compassionate; for charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not its own (its tranquillity or gain), is not easily provoked, rejoiceth not in iniquity, or does not connive at iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, covereth all things, endureth all things, never faileth.[5] Then it is evident—then the priest himself sees and his spiritual children see, whether he is a shepherd or an hireling, a father or

[1] St. Matthew xi. 12. [2] St. Matthew xv. 8; Isaiah xxix. 13.
[3] St. John vi. 63. [4] St. John viii. 37. [5] 1 Corinthians xiii. 4-8.

a stranger to his children, whether he seeks his own or Christ Jesus. My God, how difficult it is to confess people properly! How grievously one sins before God by not confessing them properly! How weak the word grows! How many hindrances the enemy puts in our way! How obstructed the source of the word becomes in the heart! How the tongue and intellect fail! O, how much preparation is required for confession! How one must pray for the successful accomplishment of this great work! And what ignorance one meets with in the spiritual children! It is necessary to be with them day and night, calmly, gently, and most patiently teaching each one of them. What a cross confession is for a priest, being conscious of the ignorance of those who confess to him, of their coldness, of their sinfulness of every kind, and having at the same time the consciousness of his own sinfulness, of his own infirmity, languidness, the inertness of his heart to sympathy, and to zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of his neighbour, as for his own. And how many crosses the Devil lays upon one during confession! He turns the work of love, the work of the discourse of a father with his children, into the work of an hireling with slaves, unwillingly reckoning with them.

The Lord Jesus Christ, together with His Father and the Holy Ghost, is everywhere. The angels and saints are one spirit with the Lord. But if, by the action of the evil spirit, you have lost for a time hearty faith in the Holy Ghost, then during that time there is neither Son nor Father for you, for faith is given by the Holy Ghost, by the Spirit of Truth—that is, the Spirit of Christ, Who said of Himself: "I am the truth;"[1] or by the Spirit of the Father: "The Spirit of your Father, Which speaketh in you;"[2] or by the Spirit of the Son: "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts."[3]

Concerning the Word. In the word there is an image of the most Holy Trinity, for in the word there is both thought, and word, and spirit. When praying truly with the whole heart, we feel that we are praying by the Holy Ghost: the words are penetrated by such hearty warmth, whilst sometimes we feel that we are praying not by the Holy Ghost, but by the spirit of falsehood: the lips say one thing, and the heart feels another, sometimes quite the contrary; for instance, we say the words with doubt, in the spirit of impatience, of resentment against someone, or in the spirit of pride, of self-exaltation, not acknowledging ourselves to be that which we really are.

[1] St. John xiv. 6. [2] St. Matthew x. 20. [3] Galatians iv. 6.

Concerning Malice. If you are angry with your brother on account of his sins, even supposing they are offensive ones, then recollect that you yourself are also not without sins which are also offensive, although they may perhaps be of a different sort. You yourself desire that your shameful sins should be covered by the indulgence, by the all-sheltering love of your neighbours; recollect how thankful you would be to them, how lovingly you would embrace them for their all-enduring love; how this indulgence would lighten your already grievous sorrow for your sins, and would strengthen your weakness in your struggle against them, would strengthen your spirit by trust in God's mercy! But that which you would desire for yourself in such cases you must also desire for and unto your brother: he is your member and a member of Christ's. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," it is said, "as thyself."[1] When judging your neighbour in the malice of your heart for his sins, always remember that you yourself are not without sin. "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye! Thou hypocrite"—truly a hypocrite—"first cast out the beam out of thine own eye: and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."[2] Besides, your brother "standeth or falleth to his own Master,"[3] and not to you. And if your brother has sinned against you, then you must certainly forgive him his offence against you, or his transgressions against you You yourself are daily greatly in need of your own sins being forgiven you by the Heavenly Father, and you pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."[4] And if you wish your sins to be forgiven you, you must forgive your brother's sins against you. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."[5]

Our soul is single, because it cannot at the same time love both God and, for instance, money, food, drink; or both its neighbour and at the same time money, food, and drink. Therefore it is said: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."[6] This is why the Psalmist says by the Holy Ghost: "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them."[7] Thus, Christian, be afraid, each one of you, of setting your heart upon money, food, drink, dress, luxurious rooms, books, or profane

[1] St. Mark xii. 31. [2] St. Matthew vii. 3-5. [3] Romans xiv. 4.
[4] St. Matthew vi. 12. [5] St. Matthew vi. 14, 15.
[6] St. Matthew vi. 24. [7] Psalm lxii. 10.

music; do not love, do not indulge the flesh by anything; either by pleasures, fine views, dainty food, and drink, or by sleep, idleness, and slothfulness, by shameful deeds, games, idle travelling, or frivolous books and sights. Love the one God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your thoughts, and your neighbour as yourself, and be indifferent to everything else in the world. Do not attach yourself to or be greedy after anything. Strive after singleness in everything, in order to be loved by the incomplex Being God. Drive away all craftiness, doubt, incredulity, and duplicity from your soul.

God is Life; He gave being and life to everything. He is That Which Is and Almighty, for everything proceeds from Him, and everything is supported by Him; let us therefore know Him Who alone Is. The Devil is death, because he voluntarily turned away from God the Life, and as God is That Which Is, so the Devil, by reason of his having completely fallen away from That Which Is, is the cause of that which is not, of imagination, enticement, for he cannot truly bring anything into being by the word; thus he is falsehood, as God is truth.

What air is to animal bodies and vegetation the Holy Ghost is to spiritual beings, to angels and men. This is why the Lord said: "The Spirit bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof" (the breathing), "but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth."[1] Believe, therefore, that your soul breathes by the Holy Ghost; know your Benefactor, your Life, reverence Him daily and honour Him by love and good works. Avoid the deadly breathing of the Devil, of the sins and passions, and especially enmity, discord, pride, and unbelief. Say to yourself oftener: My soul breathes by the Holy Ghost, may I ever glorify the Holy Ghost, together with the Father and the Son!

We must always remember that man is the breathing of God's mouth and the image of God—of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—whilst the sins and infirmities in him are accidental, coming from without, foul stains which can easily be cleansed by grace. "Thou shalt purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."[2] We must remember that "God so loved the world," though it is adulterous and sinful, "that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[3] And we must love with God (as God does) every man as ourselves. We love ourselves though

[1] St. John iii. 8. [2] Psalm li. 7. [3] St. John iii. 16.

we are great sinners; we must also love others, though they may be sinful too, for there is no one without sin.

False thoughts in the matter of faith immediately reveal themselves; they kill the life of the heart, which is a sign that they proceed from a liar, a visionary, having the power of death —the Devil. True thoughts show their truth by deeds; they give life to the heart, a sign that they proceed from the life-giving Spirit of God, the Life itself, Who proceedeth from the Life—the Father—and resteth in the Life—the Son. "By their fruits ye shall know them."[1] Do not, therefore, be disturbed, and do not linger in trouble and doubt when deadly thoughts come crowding into your head and oppress your heart and your soul; they are false, they proceed from the Devil, the destroyer of men. Drive them away, and do not ask wherefrom they come, these uninvited guests: by their fruits you shall instantly know them. Do not enter into controversy with them, it will lead you into a labyrinth from which you will not be able to extricate yourself, in which you will become entangled and exhausted.

I love to gaze upon the image of the risen Life-giver with the banner in His hand, with that symbol of victory over death and Him who has the power of death: "O death, where is Thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"[2] What a glorious Victor! What a cruel, most wicked enemy He has conquered! An enemy who gloried in his victories during thousands of years! "To Thee, Conqueror of death, we cry: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."[3] "We glorify Thee, Life-giving Christ, Who descended into hell for our sakes, and didst raise all with Thyself."[4] "In rising from the tomb, Christ, Thou didst raise all the race of Adam with Thyself."[5]

"Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."[6] From this you see that an answer and a punishment awaits you for every idle word, and not only for scandalous, shameful ones. It is because that with our Lord, the All-creating Word, there is not, and cannot be, any idle words: "The word of the Lord shall not return unto him void"[7]—"for with God nothing shall be impossible."[8] And as we are created after God's image, therefore our words too ought not to be pronounced idly, in vain, unmeaningly, but every word of ours ought to have spiritual,

[1] St. Matthew vii. 20.
[2] 1 Corinthians xv. 55.
[3] Troparia at Matins on Palm Sunday.
[4] Glorification at Matins on St. Thomas Sunday.
[5] Canon at Easter.
[6] St. Matthew xii. 36.
[7] Isaiah lv. 11.
[8] St. Luke i. 37.

edifying power. "Let your speech be alway with grace."[1] Therefore, be most watchful not to speak idly, unmeaningly, either in prayer or in conversation.

How can you worthily, with faith and love, receive the Body of Christ when you despise His members or have not compassion upon them? All Christians are members of Christ, and especially the poor. Love His members, have compassion upon them, and the Master will plentifully bestow His rich mercy upon you. And can any mercy be greater than that which our Saviour bestows upon us in the communion of His most pure body and of His most pure blood?

The words "For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever," signify Thou alone art everywhere and eternally reignest, Almighty and glorious King; or, the kingdom is the Father, the power the Spirit, and the glory the Son, for it is said, "I have glorified Thee on the earth."[2]

Do not be dead at heart, do not let your heart incline to slothfulness, to spiritual sleep, and to hardened unfeelingness; otherwise woe to you, when its disposition is such during God's service, which requires labour both of heart and mind. Uproot from your heart, by every means, both bodily and spiritual pride, which resists the Holy Ghost; it lies imperceptibly hidden in your heart, and clearly shows itself in your intercourse with your fellow-men, or during prayer.

From the essence of the thinking spirit is born the word, inherent to it, which discloses the thought, and is equal to it. From the thought, and with the thought, proceeds the spirit, resting in the word and communicating in the word to those who listen; this spirit is fully equal to the thought and to the word, and is inherent to them. For instance, in the words "I love," one sees both the loving origin and the words born from it, and one feels a kind of pleasant breathing of love.

I render thanks to the Lord my God, to the God of my salvation! During Passion Week the enemy hindered me just before the time of confession by striking my heart with straitness, disturbance, and evil despondency. But I prayed with my whole heart, and with undoubting faith to Him, to the God of my salvation, and said: "O God, most merciful Father! Thou spakest through Thine Only begotten Son, our Lord Christ, saying: 'Ask, and it shall be given you. . . . for every one that asketh receiveth. . . . or what man is there of you whom, if his son

[1] Colossians iv. 6. [2] St. John xvii. 4.

ask bread, will he give him a stone. . . . how much more shall your Father, Which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him.'[1] Embracing by faith these Thy words in my heart, I call upon Thee: Give unto me now Thy Holy Spirit that my heart may be strengthened in performing the work of confession in the wise remission or binding of the consciences of men, in patience and benignity, in kindly and edifying behaviour with my spiritual children." And what happened? O God of mercy! I went through the whole time of confession exceedingly well; I was calm, kind, edifying, and did not experience any oppression or uneasy hurry. I glorify the merciful right hand of the most gracious Heavenly Father. Thus it is ever necessary to strengthen oneself by heartfelt prayer to the Heavenly Father before every spiritual work, as our Lord Jesus Christ Himself prayed before His manifestation to mankind before the choosing of the apostles before His sufferings.

Do not be offended if anyone speaks or behaves insincerely to you, for do you yourself always speak and behave sincerely with others? Are you not often hypocritical? Do you always converse sincerely, not hypocritically, with God in prayer! Do not your lips often pronounce words of truth, while your heart lies? Do you walk before God in sincerity, in simplicity? If you yourself are not right before God and men, if you are often false, hypocritical, then do not be angry if others behave insincerely, hypocritically towards you. "Wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished."[2] Be indulgent to others in that in which you yourself sin.

Believe firmly that the wickedness of the Devil in you and your own wickedness will never conquer the unspeakable, infinite mercy of God. Great is the wickedness of the Devil in you, but the mercy of God is infinitely greater. Therefore, in times of doubt, incredulity, blasphemy, malice, envy, avarice, covetousness, involuntary hypocrisy, entreat the Lord with hope, and be sure that His infinite goodness will incline Him to have mercy upon you, if you turn from your wickedness.

Be charitable to the poor, willingly, without suspiciousness, doubt, and minute investigation, remembering that in the person of the poor you do good to Christ Himself, as it is written: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."[3] Know that your charity is always nothing in comparison with man, that child of God; know that your alms are but earth and dust; know that any material charity must absolutely be accompanied by spiritual

[1] St. Matthew vii. 7-11. [2] Wisdom xi. 16. [3] St. Matthew xxv. 40.

charity: kind, brotherly, open-hearted, loving behaviour towards your neighbour; do not let him notice that you are doing him a favour, do not appear proud. "He that giveth," it is said, "let him do it with simplicity. . . . he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness."[1] See, then, that you do not take away the value from your material charity through not showing spiritual charity. Know that on the day of judgment the Master will test your good works too. Remember that both heaven and earth are given to man, for to him "is reserved in heaven an inheritance incorruptible;"[2] for man, God the Father did not spare His Only Begotten Son, but delivered Him unto death. The Devil hinders us in our good works through our subtilty.

The words of a prayer are like rain or snow if they are pronounced with faith and feeling: each of them contains its power and its fruit. The rain-drops or snowflakes falling in a continuous stream, or in isolated flakes water the ground, and it germinates and brings forth fruit. Likewise, the words of a prayer—this spiritual rain—each separately, water the soul, it germinates and brings forth the fruits of the virtues co-operating with the Holy Ghost, especially if there is a rain of tears besides.

Human charity is suspicious: it fears lest it may somehow give to a person who already has something, or lest it may give too much. But the Lord's charity is not like this: "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works."[3] "Unto everyone that hath," says the Lord, "shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."[4]

Do not indulge your slothful flesh during prayer; do not hurry. The flesh, growing weary and oppressed by the holy work, hastens to finish praying, in order to rest or to occupy itself with worldly or carnal matters.

Let simplicity accompany you everywhere. Be especially simple in your faith, hope, and love, for God is an incomplex Being, the eternally-worshipped Unity, and our soul is also simple. The flesh hinders the simplicity of our soul when we gratify it—for instance, when we eat daintily, and, in general, when we eat and drink pleasantly and much, when we smoke, and in general do what pleases it, for then it preponderates over the spirit.

How sharply are distinguished in us, on one side, the good spirit, the spirit of peace, of tranquillity, joy, light, the life-giving

[1] Romans xii. 8.
[2] 1 Peter i. 4.
[3] Psalm cxlv. 9.
[4] St. Matthew xxv. 29.

spirit; and, on the other side, the evil spirit, the spirit of straitness, weariness, despondency, darkness, the spirit that destroys our soul. The first is the Spirit of God, by which we live, spiritually breathe, move, and exist; the second is the evil spirit, Satan.

The God of Love is unchangeable, and we ought to be unchangeable and constant in our love. "Charity never faileth,"[1] whilst dislike, hatred, or indifference and neglect proceed from the Devil.

Every word of the Master is spiritual or material being, because He is That Which Is and the Creator. The Master, the Lord God, is almighty, because He is an infinite Spirit, unlimited power and wisdom; and every thought of His immediately is or may be in accordance with His will, deed, life.

Unfortunate is he who immoderately loves the comforts of life, and has surrounded himself with all possible comforts. He will shun every discomfort; he will become effeminate and unaccustomed to patience; whilst the life of the Christian is all discomfort, narrow, rough way, a cross, requiring discomfort and great patience. And therefore, Christian wrestler, do not seek for all comforts in your dwelling and surroundings; do not love the comforts of this world, but love Christ, the cross-bearer. Endure discomfort, accustom yourself to discomforts: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content,"[2] says the Apostle. Unfortunate is he who loves adornment and seeks the adornment of his body; he will not strive as he ought for the adornment of his soul by faith, love, meekness, humility, righteousness, patience. Especially unfortunate is he who seeks to be adorned with honours; he will make a shameful idol of himself, like Nebuchadnezzar; will become proud in his demeanour towards those who have not such honours, and will exact reverence "not with costly array."[3] Even we men, like women, seek after adornment and adorn ourselves like idols, while we think but little of inward beauty, and even entirely forget the inward temple, or the tabernacle, of our soul. Unfortunate is he who loves haste: he will meet with a multitude of obstacles, with thousands of unpleasantnesses and inward straitness, through his haste, and will have many occasions for irritation. Unfortunate is he who is passionately fond of eating and drinking, cares for surfeiting and enjoyments: he will indeed find, when he begins to labour for the Lord, that food and drink, if we set our heart upon them, are a heavy burden for the body, affliction and destruction for the

[1] Corinthians xiii. 8. [2] Philippians iv. 11. [3] 1 Timothy ii. 9.

spirit, and that man can be really satisfied with very, very little and simple food.

The human soul is single, like the spirit; therefore it ought also to be single in love; that is, it ought to love God as its Author, from Whom it came forth, and man as itself—like unto like; it ought not to attach itself for an instant in any way to the things of this world, for these are not akin to it, and it is because of their not being of the same nature as our soul that the soul feels itself so ill at ease when it cleaves to them.

Every word of Holy Writ, every word of the Divine liturgy, of the morning and evening services, every word of the Sacramental prayers and of the other prayers, has in itself the power corresponding to it and contained in it, like the sign of the honourable and life-giving cross. Such grace is present in every word of the Church, on account of the Personal Incarnate Word of God, Who is the Head of the Church, dwelling in the Church. Besides this, every truly good word has in itself the power corresponding to it, owing to the all-filling simple Word of God. With what attention and reverence, with what faith, must we therefore pronounce each word! For the Word is the Creator Himself, God, and through the Word all things were brought into existence from non-existence.

The Holy Mysteries are called the Divine gifts, because they are given to us by the Lord quite freely, for nothing, undeservedly on our part. Instead of punishing us for our daily numberless transgressions and giving us over to spiritual death, the Lord, in the Holy Mysteries, grants us forgiveness and cleansing from our sins, sanctification, peace of our spiritual powers, healing and health of soul and body, and every blessing solely in accordance with our faith. If, then, the Lord daily gives us Himself, His Divine Mysteries, to partake of, ought we not therefore absolutely to give freely, for nothing, perishable goods such as money, food, drink, clothes, to those who ask us for them? And how can we be angered with those who eat our bread for nothing when we ourselves partake freely of the priceless and immortal food of the Body and Blood of the Lord? "Of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again."[1]

You live in God's house—in this beautiful world—and enjoy all the gifts of God's goodness and bountifulness freely given through nature. You live in God's house — in the Church, or in the company of the saved, and you enjoy all the gifts of grace for your salvation; also freely therefore

[1] St. Luke vi. 30.

you trust unhesitatingly and freely do good to your brethren, as far as lies in your power. Do good even to those who are unthankful and evil, that you may be the child of the Highest.[1] Receive all willingly in your house, knowing that you yourself live freely in the house of God, in the universe, and in the spiritual house of God—the Church, which prepares you for the life eternal. Give joyfully, and let others partake freely at your table, remembering that you, too, freely daily partake at the Lord's table of His most pure Body and Blood (16th April, 1862).

You say: "What can I do with my heart? It sets itself in opposition to everything true and holy; it becomes weakened by unbelief there where strong faith is required; it fails when faithfulness unto death is necessary; it does not tremble, and is even ready to mock when it should tremble and fear. What can I do! What shall I do," you say, "with my heart?" Recognise firmly, once for all as an irrevocable truth, that your heart is falsehood and a pillar of falsehood. "All men are liars,"[2] whilst everything that is in the Church, beginning with the Word of God down to the shortest prayer, is truth; that "the Church" of God "is the pillar and ground of the truth,"[3] for it is founded upon the corner-stone—Christ, Who is the Truth, and is animated and eternally guided by the Holy Ghost, Who is the Spirit of truth.

The Church is the sure way to the life eternal; walk in it undeviatingly, hold fast to it, and you will gain the kingdom of heaven; but if you turn aside at the crossways of your own sophistry and unbelief, then you have only yourself to blame, you will go astray and be lost. "I am the way, the truth, and the life."[4]

There is no doubt that in the hearts of many people the presence of the Devil manifests itself by a kind of spiritual languor, prostration, and slothfulness for every good and useful work, especially for works of faith and piety requiring attention and soberness of heart, and for spiritual work in general. Thus he strikes the heart with languor and the intellect with dulness during prayer, with coldness and indolence when it is necessary for us to do good—for instance, to have compassion upon those who suffer, to help those who are in need, to comfort those who are in sorrow, to teach the ignorant, to guide the erring and vicious into the way of truth. We must constantly watch our heart, drive away from it the mists of slothfulness

[1] St. Luke vi. 35.
[2] Psalm cxvi. 10.
[3] 1 Timothy iii. 15.
[4] St. John xiv. 6

and hardened unfeelingness, and see that it should always burn with faith and love for God and our neighbour, and ever be ready for every kind of labour and self-sacrifice for the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbour. "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit: serving the Lord."[1] The Devil also manifests his presence in our hearts by unusually violent irritation. We sometimes become so sick with our own self-love that we cannot even endure the slightest contradiction, any spiritual or material obstacles; cannot bear a single, rough, harsh word. But then is the very time for endurance when the waters of malice and impatience reach the depths of our souls. "In your patience possess ye your souls."[2] "The rain descended, and the floods came . . . upon that house."[3] What will become of it? What will become of the man himself when the Devil lets in upon him the floods of his temptations and blows upon him with the wind of his snares? If the Christian stands firmly upon the rock, Christ, then he will not fall; but if he stands upon the sand of his own sophistry and passions, then great will be his fall.[4]

Am I not everything to you, My worm, adorned with Mine image? To what, then, do you cleave? In what else do you trust? Do not leave Me, the Source of living water (of life); I am the very Life. Our Life—the Lord—is single. If He is in the heart, it is enough. He alone supports our life. Therefore it is said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."[5]

Do not be slothful in praying fervently for others at their request, or of yourself, and together with them; you will thus obtain a recompense from God—the grace of God in your heart, which shall rejoice you and strengthen you in faith and love for God and your neighbour. These words are true; they are taken from experience. In general, we do not pray very willingly for others, but more out of obligation and habit, and without our heart fully participating in the prayer; we must force ourselves to pray from the whole heart, with great faith, with great boldness, in order that we may obtain great and rich mercy from the bountiful and greatly-endowing God! "Let him ask," it is said, "in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."[6] It pleases the Lord, the common Father of all, when we pray for each other willingly with faith and love, for He is Love, ready to forgive all for their mutual love. The Holy Ghost said: "Pray one for another, that ye may be

[1] Romans xii. 11. [2] St. Luke xxi. 19. [3] St. Matthew vii. 27.
[4] St. Matthew vii. 24-27. [5] St. Matthew iv. 4. [6] James i. 6.

healed."[1] You see how pleasing to God, and how efficacious, is the prayer of one for another.

When you are praying to God, then do not represent to yourself His nearness otherwise than that you breathe every moment in Him, that you are enlightened, sanctified, rest, are comforted, and strengthened by Him—that, in a word, you live in Him, in accordance with the Scripture: "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being: He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things."[2] "God [the Word] is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart . . . that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."[3]

A Christian ought to pray for all Christians, as for himself, that God may prosper them in life, in faith, and in spiritual wisdom, and may free them from sins and passions. Why? In accordance with Christian love, which sees in all Christians, its own members and members of God the Christ, the common Saviour of all, desires for them the same as for itself, and strives by every means to do unto them as unto itself.

We have icons in our houses, and venerate them, in order to show, amongst other things, that the eyes of God and of all the heavenly dwellers are constantly fixed upon us, and see not only all our acts, but also our words, thoughts and desires.

I thank my mother Church, for having shown me in the litanies what to pray for—"For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us," in the litanies, "with groanings which cannot be uttered."[4] Glory to the grace of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter! I believe, that in accordance with the Saviour's promise, He will dwell with us for ever, and will guide us into all truth, and will not allow those to err who seek God's truth zealously and humbly. Why do we begin our prayers by the prayer to the Heavenly King—the Spirit of truth? Because He is the Teacher and the Giver of prayer, because He dwells with us for ever, and works in the world. We thank Thee, Lord Jesus, that for Thy sake the Holy Ghost also came down from heaven into the world!

Christ is our hope, our cleansing and sanctification, our resurrection, life and repose. He alone is what we all need,

[1] James v. 16.
[2] Acts xvii. 25, 28.
[3] Romans x. 8, 9.
[4] Romans viii. 26.

and, therefore, the Church constantly pronounces these words aloud so that we may hear them during the requiems or funeral services, and during the other Church services, for we are inclined to forget the only thing we need; the passions draw away after them our intellect, memory and imagination, our heart and will. With death all will be taken from us, all earthly goods: riches, honours, the beauty of the body, beauty of raiment, spacious dwellings, all the sweetness of food and drink, but the virtue of the soul, that incorruptible raiment, shall remain with us eternally; and Christ—our eternal riches, our life and true beauty, true glory and honour, our incorruptible raiment—will eternally remain with us.

In order that a Christian should lead a Christian life, and that the life of the spirit should not be completely extinguished in him, both private prayer and public prayer are necessary for him; it is also indispensable that he should attend Divine service in the temple with faith, understanding and zeal, just as it is indispensable to pour oil into a lamp, in order that it should burn and not go out; but as sincere, fervent prayer is connected with abstinence, therefore, in order to maintain the Christian life within ourselves—that is, the ardour of faith, hope, and love—abstinence and fasting are necessary. Nothing so soon extinguishes the spirit of faith within us as intemperance, indulgence, distraction and an irregular life. My spirit is quenched, I die spiritually when I do not celebrate service in the temple for a whole week, and my spirit becomes inflamed, I live again, in soul and heart, when I officiate, forcing myself to prayer, not formally, but really, spiritually, sincerely, ardently. But how many bodiless enemies I then have to struggle against! How many wiles and calumnies of theirs I have to overcome! The theatre likewise extinguishes faith and the Christian life, teaching distraction, cunning (or knowledge of the world), a fondness for laughter and joking; it trains clever children of this world, but not children of light. The theatre is the opponent of the Christian life; it is the offspring of the spirit of this world, and not of the Spirit of God. True children of the Church do not visit it.

Nothing in the world is more important than the salvation of human souls, and there is no subject more worthy of unceasing and perpetual remembrance than the redemption of the world by the Son of God from sin, the curse and eternal death. The Holy Church has engraved in her Divine services, by means of eternally indelible letters, by images and rites, the whole ordering of our salvation, in order that men—so inclined to forget God, and the salvation of their souls, and all that God has done for

their salvation, eternal joy and bliss—should constantly have, so to say, before their eyes, and as though within their reach, all God's great, most wise and good deeds concerning them, and that they may continually be urged to repentance, amendment, and salvation, and shun the vanities of this corrupt and fleeting world. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."[1]

Watch yourself continually, in order that the spiritual life and spiritual wisdom should not be dried up within you. Meditate oftener upon what you read, or sing, or hear in church, or sometimes at home. Live as the saints lived: by their prayers, wisdom, and virtues; in meekness, humility, and gentleness, not sparing yourself, but renouncing yourself, your rest, ease and enjoyment, for the love of God and your neighbour, in patience, courage and struggle—have their faith, hope and love. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding."[2]

If you read worldly magazines and newspapers, and derive some profit from them, as a citizen, a Christian, and a member of a family, then you ought still more and still oftener to read the Gospel and the writings of the Holy Fathers; for it would be sinful for a Christian, who reads worldly writings, not to read divinely-inspired ones. If you follow the events of the outer world, do not lose sight of your inner world, your own soul besides: it is nearer and dearer to you. Only to read worldly magazines and newspapers means only to live with one side of the soul, and not with the whole soul; or only to live by the flesh, and not by the spirit. Everything worldly will come to an end with the world itself. And "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof [all its devices]; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."[3]

Attachment to outward things immediately causes coldness towards God and the work of our salvation; coldness towards our neighbour, or hatred and envy towards him, if it depends upon him to give us certain things and he does not give them to us, or if we are obliged to give them to him against our will. Therefore, it is well to be perfectly indifferent to outward things, in order not to have any occasion for enmity towards our neighbour, which is a great sin. Be above all attachments to this perishable, vain, fleeting world; live by your heart in heaven, and love the incorruptible blessings prepared for those who love God and their neighbour.

[1] 1 John ii. 17. [2] St. Luke xii. 35, 36. [3] 1 John ii. 17.

A priest, like an angel of the Almighty Lord, ought to be above all passions and spiritual disturbances, above all worldly or vain attachments and fears, occasioned by demons; he ought to be entirely in God, to love and fear Him alone. The fear of man means that he does not yet entirely cleave to God.

Do not forget yourself in looking upon the bodily face—look more attentively with your inward vision upon the face of your soul, what aspect it wears: is it not disfigured by the passions? and if so, destroy this disfigurement by prayer and tearful repentance. Do not forget yourself in looking upon beautiful raiment: it is corruption; but consider the incorruptible raiment of your soul, in what state it is: is it not hideous and impure, owing to frequent transgressions, both secret and evident; and strive to clothe your soul in the imperishable beauty of meekness, humility, chastity and purity, mercy and righteousness.

"I believe in one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." Do you believe that all Orthodox Christians are members of one and the same body, and that therefore we must all "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,"[1] must care for one another, help one another? Do you believe that the saints are likewise members of the one body of Christ—that is, of the Church, and are our brethren, interceding for us before God in heaven? Do you respect every Christian, as a member of Christ, as His brother according to human nature? Do you love everybody, as yourself, as your own flesh and blood? Do you generously forgive offences? Do you help others in need, if you yourself have means? Do you teach the ignorant? Do you turn the sinner from the error of his ways? Do you comfort those who are in affliction? Faith in the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church inspires, obliges you to do all this; and for all this you are promised a great reward from the Head of the Church—our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through our attachment to perishable things, by thoughts and cares about them, we lose sight of objects of the greatest importance, of the objects really natural to our souls, constituting their true and eternal element; we hew out for ourselves "cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water," and forsake "the Fountain of living waters";[2] we do not turn spiritual, holy, heavenly and life-giving thoughts into our life, into our blood, and continue to live by worldly, earthly, passionate thoughts and aspirations, which only oppress, torment, and slay us. O, if we could ever reason, as the Gospel teaches

[1] Ephesians iv. 3. [2] Jeremiah ii. 13.

us, as the holy Church teaches us in her Divine services, prayers, at the celebration of the sacraments and other offices, as the Holy Fathers did in their writings! Then even upon earth we should all become citizens of heaven, speaking heavens.

The Divine Liturgy is truly a heavenly service upon earth, during which God Himself, in a particular, immediate, and most close manner, is present and dwells with men, being Himself the invisible Celebrant of the service, offering and being offered. There is nothing upon earth holier, higher, grander, more solemn, more life-giving than the Liturgy. The temple, at this particular time, becomes an earthly heaven; those who officiate represent Christ Himself, the Angels, the Cherubim, Seraphim and Apostles. The Liturgy is the continually repeated solemnisation of God's love to mankind, and of His all-powerful mediation for the salvation of the whole world, and of every member separately: the marriage of the Lamb—the marriage of the King's Son, in which the bride of the Son of God is—every faithful soul; and the Giver of the bride—the Holy Ghost. With what prepared, pure, elevated souls it is therefore necessary to assist at the Liturgy, in order not to be amongst the number of those who, having no wedding garment, but a garment defiled by passions, were bound hand and foot, and cast out from the marriage feast into utter darkness. Whilst now, unfortunately, many do not even consider it necessary to assist at the Liturgy at all; others only go out of habit, and go away in the same state of mind as they came, without elevated thoughts, without a contrite heart, with an unrepentant soul, without the determination to amend. Some stand in church irreverently, inattentively, without any concentration of mind, without any previous self-preparation at home by means of meditation and abstinence; and many manage to drink and eat more than they should before service. When the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai the Hebrew people were ordered to previously prepare and cleanse themselves. In the Divine service we have not a lesser event than God's descent upon Mount Sinai, but a greater one: here before us is the very face of God the Lawgiver. When the Lord appeared to Moses upon Mount Horeb in the bush, he was ordered to put off his shoes from his feet; but here is a greater manifestation of God than upon Horeb; there was only the prototype, here is the Typifier Himself. O, how we cling to earthly things! We do not even wish to devote one hour exclusively to God! Even during the Divine, most heavenly Liturgy we allow ourselves to think and dream of earthly things, and fill our souls with images and desires for earthly things, sometimes—alas!—even with

impure images; when we ought to be praying ardently, to be assiduously meditating upon this great mystery, to be repenting of our sins, longing and praying to be cleansed, sanctified, enlightened, renewed, and strengthened in the Christian life, and in the fulfilment of Christ's commandments; when we ought to be praying for the living and dead; for the Liturgy is a sacrifice of propitiation, thanksgiving, praise, and prayer. Great is the Liturgy! In it remembrance is made, not of the life of any great man, but that of God Incarnate, Who suffered and died for us, Who rose again, ascended into heaven, and Who shall come again to judge the whole world!

What is the false gratitude to God? Gratitude is false when, having received bountiful, undeserved spiritual and material gifts from God, people thank God for them with their tongue, and use them only for their own advantage, not sharing them with their neighbours; when they obtain them and conceal them in their treasuries, chests, libraries; thus depriving many of their brethren of spiritual enlightenment, instruction, and consolation; or of food, drink, clothing, dwelling; or of being cured of their maladies; or of the means of moving from one place to another for the purpose of acquiring means of subsistence. Such gratitude is false and impious. It means thanking God with the tongue, and meanwhile showing extreme ingratitude and ill-nature in deed. But how many such grateful—or, rather, ungrateful—men there are!

Our corrupt nature is inclined to speedily forget everything holy and salutary, because sins and passions continually cloud and darken our heads and hearts, occupy them, and dominate in them, thrusting out remembrances, thoughts, and feelings about holy events and God's great benefits to us. Therefore the holy Church, faithful guardian of her Lord's commandments, of all His teaching and works, eternally grateful for His unspeakable benefits, has instituted the solemn commemorative celebration, in the daily, as well as in the Sunday and festival services, with picturesque, impressive, emblematical rites, of all the saving events of the life and acts of our Lord Jesus Christ, all the orderings of His salvation in the Old and in the New Testament, as well as the creation itself by Him of the visible and invisible world; and not only the events of His own all-saving, most wonderful life, but also those from the life of His Most Pure Mother, Who so gloriously served to the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God; from the life of His Forerunner, and the lives of the Apostles, Prophets, Hierarchs, Martyrs, venerable Fathers, disinterested, righteous persons, and of all the Saints, who pleased

and served God in every way; of these innumerable witnesses of the Lord, and of the truth and saving properties of His Divine religion, and all His Divine teaching, who have inherited the life everlasting in accordance with His promise. This is useful and necessary for the strengthening of our faith, hope and love, for the spiritual education of all Christian mankind; for constantly teaching them the dogmas of faith and various virtues, such as faithfulness, courage, patience, meekness, kindness, humility, disinterestedness, abstinence, purity, chastity, and other virtues; for the lives of the Lord and of His Most Pure Mother, as well as those of the Saints, present examples of all the virtues, by fulfilling which a man can become well-pleasing to God, and save his own soul and the souls of his brethren.

The science of sciences is to conquer the sin dwelling in us, or the passions acting in us. For instance, it is great wisdom not to be angry with anyone, nor at anything; not to think evil of anyone, not even if someone has done us harm, but to excuse him in every way; it is wisdom to despise gain, luxuries, but to love disinterestedness, and simplicity of food and drink, combined with constant moderation; it is wisdom not to flatter anyone, but to speak the truth fearlessly to everybody; it is wisdom not to be charmed by beauty of person, but to respect in all, whether they be handsome or ugly, the beauty of the image of God, which is equally in all; it is wisdom to love your enemies and not to take vengeance upon them either by word, thought, or deed; it is wisdom not to amass wealth for ourselves, but to give it to the poor, in order to gain for ourselves "a treasure in the heavens that faileth not."[1] Alas! we have studied nearly all the sciences, but have not learnt the science of avoiding sins, and often show ourselves entirely ignorant of this moral science. And thus it follows that the truly wise, the truly learned, were the holy, true disciples of the true Teacher, Christ; whilst all of us, so-called learned men, are ignorant; and the more learned we are, the worse is our ignorance, because we do not know and do not do the one thing needful, but only serve our self-love, love of fame, sensuality and covetousness.

How indifferent a priest should be to earthly things, in order that when celebrating such services, such high and most heavenly sacraments, he may not be ensnared by the enemy, but may always burn with pure love for God and his fellow men, who are lost through sins and are saved by the grace of Christ in the Holy Ghost! But how greatly we are wont to

[1] St. Luke xii. 33.

sin! How strong are our earthly attachments! Even when celebrating the sacraments, we sometimes, through being accustomed to them, do not completely lay aside worldly cares and attachments, and therefore the enemy disturbs, darkens and perverts our mind, binds our heart, and takes us prisoners. And deservedly! Do not dream. A priest should be an angel by the elevation of his thoughts, by the purity of his soul and body, by the ardour of his love for God, the Creator of all things, and the Saviour, and for men, his brethren.

To love God with all your heart means—to love with all your soul meekness, humility, purity and chastity, wisdom, truth, mercy, obedience, for the sake of God, and never to act contrarily to these virtues; that is, not to become proud, irritated, angry against anyone; not to commit adultery even in the heart; not to violate chastity, either by look, thought, or gesture; to avoid every inconsiderate, needless word and deed; to shun every iniquity; to hate avarice and covetousness; to flee from self-will and disobedience.

The passions spur us on like cruel drivers, daily urging us, through our love for earthly things, to act in opposition to the Lord and to our own true welfare, and to do that which is pleasing to the flatterer, Satan.

I thank Thee, my joy, Lord of glory, for having taken my image, through the incarnation of the Most Pure Virgin, and for having thus honoured, raised, and made mankind godly. I thank Thee for raising me from corruption unto incorruption; for cleansing my impurities; for healing my infirmities and sicknesses; for turning my sorrow into joy, the straitness of sin into the wideness of Thy justification: for through faith and heartfelt penitence Thou drivest away the darkness of the passions, and bestowest Thy spiritual light. Thou takest away disturbance, and sendest down peace from above. Thou takest away faint-heartedness, and bestowest courage and daring. Glory to Thy mercy!

I gaze upon the icons in the temple—upon Thy holy icon, my Lord, upon that of Thy Most Pure Mother, those of the holy Angels and Archangels, and upon the faces of the saints, adorned, resplendent with gold and silver—and think to myself how Thou hast honoured and adorned our nature, Creator and Provider of all! Thy saints shine with Thy light, they are sanctified by Thy grace, having conquered sin and washed away the sinful impurities of body and spirit; they are glorious with Thy glory, they are incorruptible through Thine incorruptibility. Glory to Thee for having

so honoured, enlightened, and raised our nature! Here are Thine Apostles and Hierarchs, living images of Thee, the Highest, Who passed through the heavens, Envoy of the Father, Hierarch and Chief of Shepherds; Thy goodness, Thy wisdom, Thy might, spiritual beauty, power, and holiness shine in them. Here are Thy martyrs, who by Thy strength overcame terrible temptations and endured fearful tortures; they have washed the garments of their souls white in Thy blood. Here are Thy venerable ones, who by fasting, vigilance, and prayer obtained Thy wonderful gifts, the gifts of healing, of discernment; Thy might strengthened them to stand above sin and all the snares of the Devil; Thy likeness shines forth in them like the sun.

In the temple, in its arrangements and parts, in the icons, in the Divine service, with the reading of the Holy Scriptures, the singing, the rites, the entire Old Testament, New Testament, and Church history, the whole Divine ordering of the salvation of mankind is emblematically traced, as upon a chart, in figures and in general outlines. Grand is the spectacle of the Divine service of our Orthodox Church for those who understand it, who penetrate into its essence, its spirit, its signification, its sense!

Sensualist! upon what will you set your love after your death, when you will no longer have any carnal delights, and their place is filled by the bitterness of entire deprivation? Upon what will your imperishable soul be fed? Carnal delights will no longer be compatible with it. Covetous man! upon what will you set your heart's love when with your death the possession and enjoyment of your money and various treasures cease? Your soul, a spiritual being, will not then require these treasures; they would be repugnant to it, like poison, like the rust and rottenness which corrupted it during its lifetime, estranging it from God and depriving it of the incorruptible treasure—God. Proud, ambitious man! you who seek distinctions and honours, and love them above everything in the world! upon what will you set your love when death divests you of all your distinctions and shows you in all your nakedness and deformity? What will then be the food and life of the imperishable spirit that has withdrawn itself from God for the sake of the vain honours of this world, making a god of itself, like the worshippers of idols? So vain is the man subjected to passions that he does not understand what he does, what deprivations he prepares for himself, what torment for his foolish passions, that after having been honoured by the likeness of God, by the name of a child of God, of a friend of God, of an heir of the heavenly kingdom, of a joint heir with Christ, by his foolishness "he may be compared unto the beasts that perish,"[1]

[1] Psalm xlix. 12.

in greediness, in his sensual fury, in malice, in envy! Therefore fear to cleave with your whole soul to anything earthly.

Imagery or symbols are a necessity of human nature in our present spiritually sensual condition; they explain by the vision many things belonging to the spiritual world which we could not know without images and symbols. It was for this reason that the Divine Teacher, the Personal Wisdom Who created all things, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, often taught men by means of images or parables; it is for this reason also that in our Orthodox temples it is the custom to represent many things to the gaze of the Christian by imagery: for instance, to represent the Lord Himself, the Most Pure Mother of God, the Angels and saints, on icons, in order that we may conform our lives, all our thoughts, words, and deeds, to the image of the thoughts, words, and deeds of the Lord and His saints; hence also the frequent making of the sign of the cross, the use of incense, the burning of candles and lamps, the processions in and out of the altar; hence the genuflections, the bowing of the head and the falling down upon the face (for we have fallen deeply through sin). All these remind us of various spiritual things and conditions. Imagery greatly influences the human soul, its creative or active capacity. Thus it is said that if during the time preceding the birth of her child a mother often looks upon the face or portrait of her beloved husband, then the child is born very like his father, or if she often looks upon the portrait of a beautiful child she gives birth to a beautiful infant; thus, if a Christian often gazes with love and reverence upon the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, or of His Most Pure Mother and His saints, his soul will receive the spiritual features of the face lovingly looked upon (meekness, humility, mercy, and abstinence). O, if we oftener contemplated the images, and especially the life of the Lord and of His saints, how we should change, and rise from strength to strength! Thus, the fragrance of incense in church or in our houses reminds us by analogy of the fragrance of virtue, and by contrast of the evil odour of sins, and teaches those who are attentive to inward feelings to avoid the stench of the passions, of intemperance, fornication, malice, envy, pride, despair and other passions, and to adorn themselves with every Christian virtue; the incense reminds us of the Apostle's words: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life."[1] In a like manner the candles or lamps burning in church remind us of the spiritual light and fire; for instance, of the Lord's

[1] 2 Corinthians ii. 15, 16.

words: "I am come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness;"[1] or "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?"[2] or "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately;"[3] or "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven."[4] And the objects themselves by their very nature teach us concerning the spiritual objects and things corresponding to light and fire; for instance, that our hearts should always be burning with love for God and our neighbour, that we should not let the passions or the fire of Gehenna be kindled within us, and that by the example of a virtuous life we should light others, as a candle lights us in our worldly doings.

It is natural for us to have images of Christ, of His Most Pure Mother, of the Angels and saints. Firstly, because it is a requirement of our nature: we always wish to have before us an image of the Beloved, an image of our Benefactor, in order that in gazing upon it we may oftener remember Him and His benefactions (worship Him), the same as we do with living persons, especially with those whom we love and respect. Secondly, we are created after the image and likeness of God, therefore it is natural for us to wish to have always before our eyes our own Prototype, our First Origin, the Lord God, in those images, in which He was pleased to manifest Himself to men, in order that we should oftener remember Him, His constant presence with us, His providence; in order to express our reverence, gratitude, and love to Him in visible signs or ceremonies; for we are corporal, and on account of our corporality we need material representations, material ceremonies. It was certainly because of this that the Lord Himself appeared to His saints—for instance, to Abraham, in the form of three strangers, under the tree upon the plains of Mamre; to Isaiah in the form of a great King, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; to the prophet Daniel in the form of the Ancient of Days and in the form of the Son of Man, brought near before Him. Had not the visible image of the invisible God been necessary, He certainly would not have appeared in a visible manner; would not have appeared upon earth in our flesh; would not have taken the form of a servant. And David says: "Seek His face evermore."[5] For this reason also we make, keep in our houses, and venerate, pictures of the Most Pure

[1] St. John xii. 46. [2] St. Luke xii. 49. [3] St. Luke xii. 35, 36.
[4] St. Matthew v. 16. [5] Psalm cv. 4.

Mother of God, of the Angels and saints, because they are living images and likenesses of God, and, looking upon them, we remember more vividly their great deeds, virtues, their benefactions to us, their ardent love to God, and we ourselves thus become inspired to imitate them in their constant vigilance over themselves, in cleansing ourselves from every impurity of body and spirit, and we glorify their exploits, thus making them our intercessors and protectors before God, for God deigns to accept the intercession of His friends and faithful servants on behalf of those for whom they intercede before Him. As we are not bodiless spirits, but beings, covered with flesh, having material contours and a material image, it is natural that we should seek images of invisible beings; and it was indeed in condescension to our infirmity that the Lord gave the Angels power to take our form upon themselves and appear to us (when He pleases) in our image, as, for instance, when the Archangel appeared to Joshua, the son of Nun, to David, to Manoah and Hannah, to Zacharias, to the Most Pure Virgin Mary, and to other saints of the Old and New Testaments. Do we not ourselves prove in our daily life the requirement of our nature, its longing to have representations of the persons whom we love, when we express the desire to have their portraits and have our own portraits done, hang them up on the walls, or place them in albums, in order to look at them often, and to enjoy contemplating the respected and beloved faces? And this natural, right, and pious veneration of the holy icons many Lutherans and Anglicans regard as something unnatural, repugnant to God, as idolatry and heresy; they have not icons either in their houses or even in their temples, and consider it a sin to have and worship them. Through this they lose much in faith and piety, for by breaking the visible connection with the saints they likewise destroy the invisible one, whilst in reality, as the Church is heavenly and earthly, it forms one body. They have broken in the same way their connection with the departed, because they do not pray for them and do not offer sacrifices for their souls, sacrifices which are well-pleasing to the merciful God; and thus prove their unbelief in the power of the prayers of the Church for the departed. What kind of a Church is this that has unwisely and audaciously broken her ties with the heavenly, triumphant Church? has interrupted communion by means of prayers with the departed, and broken off communion with the Church that professes the faith in Christ in its primitive purity? Is it a living and holy body of the Church? Can a single trunk of the body, without head, without hands and feet, without eyes and ears, be called a living, organised body? And yet such a community proclaims its faith as the purified, true faith, and eschews the rites of our holy, spotless religion. Is that religion purified that

has rejected the Sacrament of Orders and the other sacraments, excepting Baptism and Holy Communion, which last, however, is not valid; has rejected the veneration of the saints, of their relics, icons, fasting, monasticism, and prayers for the departed? Is this the faith of the Gospel? Is it the Church of Christ and the Apostolic Church? No; it is a self-made Church, constituted by the will of men, under the influence of human passions and pleasing human passions; it is "the truth in unrighteousness"[1]; it is the perverted Gospel of Christ; it is the perversion or turning away of Christ's people "unto another Gospel," of which the Apostle said: "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."[2] It is not a Church, but a soul-destroying dissection of the body of Christ. And thus the veneration of icons is natural, righteous, pleasing to God, and profitable.

The holy Angels and God's saints are our best, kindest, and truest brothers and friends, so often helping us in various circumstances in which no human beings can help us. As these brothers, who eternally live and load us with benefits, are invisible, whilst we, on account of our corporality, wish to have them before our eyes and as though always present with us, therefore we have images of them; and, looking upon these images, we represent to ourselves that they are with us, and we call upon them in our prayers, knowing that they have great boldness before God and help us in various circumstances. Thus the veneration of icons is most beneficial for us, corresponding with our nature and with common-sense, as well as with the Holy Scriptures themselves, for there were images of the Cherubim in Moses' tabernacle of the Old Testament. Icons serve as a constant reminder to us that the Lord is always with us ("I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"[3]); that the Most Holy Mother of God is always near us as the "First-Origin of the spiritual renovation"[4] of the Church, as the Mother by grace of all true Christians. And therefore all true Christians have in their houses the image of the Mother of God, their Queen and Mother by grace, and abundantly, worthily, and rightly adorn it with silver, gold, and precious stones; for, after God, there is no one dearer and more reverenced by them than His Most Pure Mother. Both the Lord Himself and His Most Pure Mother continually prove to us by means of miracles, both inwardly and outwardly, that our true veneration of His

[1] Romans i. 18. [2] Galatians i. 6, 8. [3] St. Matthew xxviii. 20.
[4] From the Acathistos to the Most Holy Mother of God.

saints, and of His Mother, and of His holy icons, is pleasing to Him and profitable to us in the highest degree.

The Nativity of Christ.—He has come upon earth, He Who in the beginning created us from earth and breathed His Divine breath into us; He has come Who "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things"[1]; He has come, He Who by a single word called all things visible and invisible from non-existence into existence, Who by a word called into being birds, fishes, quadrupeds, insects, and all creatures, existing under His almighty providence and care; He has come, He Whom the innumerable hosts of Angels continually serve with fear and joy. And in what humility has He come! He is born of a poor Virgin, in a cave, wrapped in poor swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. Riches, honours, glory of this world! fall down, fall down in humility, tearful devotion, and deep gratitude before the Saviour of men, and share your riches with the poor and needy. Do not pride yourselves on your visionary, fleeting distinctions, for true distinction can only be found in virtue. Glory of this world! learn here, before the manger, your vanity. Thus, let us all humble ourselves; let us all fall down in the dust before the boundless humility and exhaustion of the Sovereign of all, of God, Who has come to heal our infirmities, to save us from pride, vanity, corruption, and every sinful impurity.

Sin, in itself, is fire; this is why we say that such or such an one is inflamed by anger, or by carnal love, or by envy. Thus sin bears in itself the condemnation of fire. What, then, will this fire be in sinners when through their impenitence the grace of God entirely leaves them? What will this outward fire also be for sinners? For there is no doubt that there will be the lake of fire, the fiery furnace, or the Gehenna of fire, or the valley of fire. All these truly exist. And we in our insensibility do not fear, do not tremble; we spend our lives in enjoyments; we are cold towards the Church; we do not fulfil our Christian duties; we stagnate in our sins. Woe unto us!

Our priestly service is to repeat over and over again the same prayers, although very diverse, beginning with the Lord's Prayer "Our Father," as it is the duty of all men in general to fulfil the same commandments of the moral law; for it is not by the variety of prayers that the soul is strengthened, but by their repetition, and by their being brought into our hearts, our will or activity, and into our whole life.

Avoid by every means occasions, causes, and words that

[1] Acts xvii. 25.

produce enmity, and avail yourself of every opportunity and occasion to show holy and sincere love: by doing the first the inimical disposition of the soul will little by little be eradicated, and by the second love will be nourished and strengthened. Do not allow yourself for a moment to have any ill-feeling against anyone; always be kind to everyone, conquering your evil disposition by the love that endureth all things and conquereth all things. Avoid obstinacy, self-will, and opposing your neighbour; do not persist in having your own way, in order to satisfy your caprice, or in order to intentionally injure anyone.

One definite commandment was given to Adam and Eve, in order that by fulfilling this one commandment—which was, moreover, a very easy one—men might acquire the habit of fulfilling the will of God, the fulfilment of which constitutes the whole well-being of creatures, and might be strengthened in the love of God. If we turn our attention to the contrary—to the non-fulfilment of the will of the Creator and the fulfilment of our own will, in opposition to the Creator's—we observe that little by little a man changes for the worse and perverts his own high nature, created after the image and likeness of God, and becomes God's enemy. So important is the fulfilment of God's commandments, and so destructive is their non-fulfilment! By giving to the first men His definite commandment not to eat the fruits of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the Lord God revealed Himself as the Guide of the newly-created reasonable creatures, of His children by adoption. Whose fault was it that this guidance was rejected, and that man preferred to be governed by his own will? Even until now, notwithstanding all the progress in sciences and arts, notwithstanding all the treasures of human wisdom, neither the man of ancient nor of modern times can educate himself, because he rejected even from the beginning the guidance of God; for, say, who but God should be our guide? And both at present and in the past only those men successfully completed their mental and moral education who trusted in God and lived in accordance with His commandments, or who now live in accordance with the Gospel and the teaching of the Church, submitting themselves to her guidance. This is useful for all modern teachers to remember. We have many sciences, but the result obtained is small; our youths have much in their heads, whilst in their hearts they have but little—very little, and often, alas! even nothing. Life, then, does not correspond with education and science. But "though I understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."[1]

[1] 1 Corinthians xiii. 2, 3.

The Church, through the temple and Divine service, acts upon the entire man, educates him wholly; acts upon his sight, hearing, smelling, feeling, taste, imagination, mind, and will, by the splendour of the icons and of the whole temple, by the ringing of bells, by the singing of the choir, by the fragrance of the incense, the kissing of the Gospel, of the cross and the holy icons, by the prosphoras, the singing, and sweet sound of the readings of the Scriptures.

Our prayer must be deep, sincere, wise, and fruitful; it must change our heart, direct our will to good, withdrawing us from evil. Superficial prayer is hypocrisy, a mocking at sacred things—vain prayer. "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me."[1]

When praying to the Mother of God, to the angels and saints, we recognise them as the one mysterious body of the Church, to which we ourselves also belong, though we are sinful; and we believe that out of love they pray to God for our salvation. When praying fervently for the various classes of society, for persons of our earthly country, and for the whole world, we recognise ourselves also as one great body with all through the spirit of love and good-will towards all as to ourselves. Finally, when praying for the repose of the souls of the departed (in heaven, upon earth,[2] and in hell), we consider them also as forming one spiritual body with ourselves, and we desire peace and rest for them in the immortal country, acknowledging that their souls actually live, and that we ourselves perhaps very soon shall join them. This is the fruit of the faith of Christ—the union of love with all, with those in heaven, upon earth, and in hell. How high is the spirit of the Church! O, if we could raise ourselves up to this spirit! Penetrate into the spirit of the Christian Divine service, into the spirit of the litanies, the sacraments, rites, and be imbued with it yourselves. Woe unto those who have withdrawn themselves from the Church: they will become completely possessed by the spirit of the world, by the spirit of evil.

Only faithful servants of Christ give true value to the Incarnation of the Son of God, and to the care of God the Father and the All-Holy Trinity for the salvation of mankind; only they truly value the most pure Body and Blood of Christ, whilst men of this world live like the beasts that have no understanding, in

[1] St. Matthew xv. 8.

[2] The Orthodox Church holds that the souls of the departed are in an intermediate state during forty days after death.

worldly sorrows and in sensual pleasures, not valuing either the Incarnation of the Son of God or His most pure Mysteries. And as God's chosen ones duly value the works of God and the infinite love of God to this adulterous and sinful world, so also God Himself values them, and accomplishes wonderful deeds through them. The Holy Ghost, together with the Father and the Son, dwells in them, and out of their bellies flow rivers of living water; and those who know God go to them to drink of this water, as to sweet springs. Let us all be servants of Christ.

The sun shines in the universe. The Mental Sun—God—unceasingly shines in the souls of the chosen.

God rests in the saints and even in their very names, in their very images; it is only necessary to use their images with faith, and they will work miracles.

Grant unto me, Most Holy Virgin, purity of heart, simple heartfelt, and son-like trust, devotion and love to Thee, both now and for ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen

The Liturgy is a visible representation in persons, in various objects, words, and acts, of the birth, life, teaching, commandments, miracles, and prophecies, of the sufferings, of the crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven of the Founder of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God. During the Liturgy He Himself invisibly assists, He Himself acts and accomplishes everything through the priest and deacon, who are only His instruments.

It is as easy for a believer to attract the Holy Ghost to himself, as it is easy to draw air into one's self; like air, He fills everything and penetrates everything. "Who art everywhere present and fillest all things." He who prays fervently, draws the Holy Ghost into himself, and prays by the Holy Ghost.

Prayer is the breathing of the soul, just as air is the natural breathing of the body. We breathe by the Holy Ghost. You cannot say a single word of prayer with the whole heart without the help of the Holy Ghost. When praying, you are conversing, mouth to mouth, with the Lord; and if the mouth of your heart is open by faith and love, then it is as though you breathed into yourself, from Him, the spiritual blessings you ask for by the Holy Ghost.

What is our life? The burning of a candle; He Who gave it has but to blow—and it goes out. What is our life? The journey of a traveller; as soon as it reaches a certain limit, the gates are opened to him, he lays aside his travelling dress (the body) and his staff, and enters into his house. What is our life? A prolonged bloody war for the possession of the true country and true freedom. When the war is over, we shall be either conquerors or conquered; we shall be called from the place of combat to the place of reward, and obtain from the Recompenser either eternal reward, eternal glory, or eternal punishment, eternal shame.

Man is a wonderful, grand creation of God, especially a holy man; he is a star of God; he is a splendid flower, wholly beautiful and pure, a sweet-smelling cedar-tree, a priceless pearl, a precious stone, a beautiful, fruitful tree of God's paradise. Man is truly a wonderful creature of God! Glory be to his Creator and Providence! Glory be to the Saviour of mankind, Who draws us out of the mire of the passions, from corruption and death, and leads us into the life eternal!

I thank the Lord and my holy mother the Church, the spotless and incorruptible bride of Christ, for having shown, made even and smooth for me, the true path to salvation, cutting off at the Œcumenical and Provincial Councils all heresies and schisms which might have served as great obstacles and hindrances to our salvation in God, for having valiantly, gloriously, and victoriously overcome all the persecutors of the faith, and stood in defence for me of the royal path of the holy truth, that leads into the life eternal. I thank her for having preserved all the sacraments instituted by the Lord, leading me by a sure path unto salvation. I thank her for having instituted for me the splendid Divine service—that angelic service upon earth; for yearly solemnising all the most important events of the earthly life of my Lord and of His most pure Mother; for the due and grateful remembrance of the unspeakable benefits of God to us, manifested in our redemption by the Son of God from sin, the curse and death; and for daily representing in the Divine Liturgy to my reverent attention all the earthly life of my Lord. I thank her for glorifying in the daily Divine service the exploits of God's saints, and for pointing them out to me as living examples of faith, hope, and love to God, and of the various ways leading to eternal life. I thank her, my holy mother, for the writings of the Holy Fathers and teachers of the Church, for their sweet and soul-saving words, left as an inheritance to us. I thank her for the divinely-instituted priesthood, accomplishing in Christ

and by Christ my salvation, reconciling me with God, sanctifying, comforting, strengthening me, pasturing me, and leading me into the heavenly fold.

Do not despond in the time of violent temptations, afflictions, or sicknesses, or at obstacles arising from the disturbance of the enemy; all this is the reproof and chastisement of the righteous Lord, Who trieth the hearts and reins, for your cleansing, arousing, and correction, for burning out the thorns of carnal passions. And therefore do not complain if you sometimes suffer greatly. Do not think of the suffering, but of the blessed consequences of this chastisement, and the health of the soul. What would you not do for the health of your body? Still more must you bear everything for the health and salvation of your soul, which has eternal life.

Do not put your trust in money, but in God, who unwearyingly cares for all, and above all for His reasonable creatures endued with speech, and especially for those who live piously. Believe that His hand does not fail, above all for those who are charitable, for man cannot be more bountiful than God. Your own life and the lives of all those who lived before and were charitable serve as a proof of this. Let God alone be the treasure of your heart; cleave wholly to Him as one created after His image and likeness, and flee from earthly corruption, continually contaminating our souls and bodies. Hasten towards the life that does not pass away, towards the life that never ages; draw there all others too, as far as lies in your power.

Lord! teach me to bestow charity willingly, kindly, joyfully, and to believe that by bestowing it I do not lose, but gain infinitely more than that which I give. Turn my eyes away from hard-hearted people who do not sympathise with the poor, who meet poverty with indifference, who judge, reproach, brand it with shameful names, and weaken my heart, so that I may not do good, so that I, too, may harden my heart against poverty. O, my Lord, how many such people we meet with! Lord, amend works of charity! Lord, grant that every charity I bestow may be profitable, and may not do harm! Lord, accept Thyself charity in the person of Thy poor. Lord, deign to help me to build a house for the poor in this town, concerning which I have already many times prayed to Thee, the All-Merciful, Almighty, Most Wise, Wonderful! (The house was since built.)

Gazing upon the images of Christ the Saviour, of His most pure Mother, and of God's saints, imagine in what glory our nature is clothed by God's mercy, wisdom, and power, and what

glory, what bliss, awaits all the Lord's faithful servants; forsake all irrational desires and worldly attachments, earthly corruption and dross; love the Lord and the holy law of His Gospel with all your heart, with all your soul, and aspire to the honour of God's heavenly calling, to the life eternal that never ages.

O, if we turned our attention to the consequences of our sins or of our good works! How careful we should then be to shun sin, and how zealous in all that is good! For we should then clearly see that every sin not eradicated in time becomes strengthened by habit, becomes deeply rooted in a man's heart, and sometimes troubles, torments, and wounds him until death, becoming, so to say, awakened and revived in him upon every occasion, reminding him of the sin formerly committed, and thus defiling his thoughts, feelings, and conscience. Streams of tears are necessary to wash away the inveterate filthiness of sin. How tenacious and malignant it is! Whilst, on the contrary, every good action done at any time sincerely, disinterestedly, or having become a habit by repetition, rejoices our hearts and forms the joy and comfort of our life by the consciousness that we have not spent our life entirely in vain, full of sins though it is; that we are like men and not beasts; that we, too, are created after the image of God, and that there is a spark of the Divine light and love in us; that, although they are but few, our good works will form a counterpoise for our evil ones in the balance of God's incorruptible righteousness.

I am touched by the spirit of holy love to all mankind moving throughout all the prayers, supplications, petitions, thanksgivings, psalm-singing, and readings in the Divine service of our Orthodox Church. O, what ought the priest to be, the organ of this Divine heavenly mother upon earth, who unceasingly cares with such love for all her children, from the sovereign down to the lowliest peasant, from the holy governing assembly to the lowliest of the Church clergy, and not only for her true children, but also for the whole world! How full of love for all ought the pastor to be—this child of the Church, whom she has invested with the grace of the priesthood, and who draws so near to the throne of God, as one of her faithful, as the friend of God, whom she has honoured, upon whom she has bestowed such great spiritual gifts and privileges, whom she has crowned with glory and honour as the bridegroom of the Church, as the servant of Christ the King, of God the Saviour, and as the pastor of souls! How far from him should be all the passions —respect of persons, self-love, sensual carnal love, pride, enmity, love of gain, slothfulness, despondency, murmuring, and other passions! He should be penetrated and filled with Divine love

for all, and his chief care should be to stand without sin before the throne of God, to uplift his reverent hands for all men, and to save, early and late, the souls entrusted to him, redeemed by the priceless blood of Christ. "And who is sufficient for these things?" May the Lord in the multitude of His mercies grant these things unto us! For of ourselves we are cold, self-loving, malevolent, covetous, despondent, murmuring, and slothful.

What is the meaning of the exclamation so often sung in church: "Lord, have mercy upon us"? It is the lament of the guilty, condemned sinner, imploring forgiveness of an irritated justice. We are all under the eternal curse and doomed to eternal fire for our innumerable sins, and it is only the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, interceding for us before the Heavenly Father, that saves us from eternal punishment. It is the lament of the repentant sinner, expressing his firm intention to amend and begin a new life, becoming for a Christian. It is the lament of the repentant sinner, ready to forgive others, as he himself was and is immeasurably forgiven by God, the Judge of his deeds.

Passion is burning, agitated, inconsiderate, evil, impetuous, and therefore a man under the influence of passion—for instance, in anger—says a great deal that is unconsidered, untrue, imaginary, evil, and what he would not say when calm. And thus, knowing by experience that such is the nature of passion, in the first place—do not talk yourself when you are agitated, in malice; and in the second place—forgive those who are hot-tempered and irritated, when they pour forth abuse and reproaches, either just or unjust.

As light and heat are inseparable from the sun, so holiness, instruction, love and compassion for all ought to be inseparable from the person of a priest; for Whose dignity does he bear?—Christ's. Of Whom does he so often communicate? Christ—God Himself, of His Body and Blood. Therefore a priest should be the same in the spiritual world, in the midst of his flock, as the sun is in nature: a light for all, life-giving warmth, the soul of all.

The Saviour deigned to become incarnate, not only in order to save us when sins and passions have already overcome us, when we are entangled in them, but also in order to save us, at our prayer, when sins and passions are as yet only striving to enter into us, when they attack us. We must not slumber nor be disheartened when the passions attack us; on the contrary,

[1] 2 Corinthians ii. 16.

this is the very time to be on the watch, to take courage and pray to Christ not to let us fall into sin. It is not the time to save a house from fire, when the fire has already spread, but rather when the flame has just appeared. It is the same with the soul. The soul is the house, and the passions the fire. "Neither give place to the Devil."[1]

Do not fear the conflict, and do not flee from it: where there is no struggle, there is no virtue; where there are no temptations for faithfulness and love, it is uncertain whether there is really any faithfulness and love for the Lord. Our faith, trust, and love are proved and revealed in adversities, that is, in difficult and grievous outward and inward circumstances, during sickness, sorrow, and privations.

Charity is the seed. If you desire that it should bring forth good fruit an hundredfold, make this seed good, by bestowing your charity with simplicity, and from a good, merciful compassionate heart. Be assured that you will not lose much, or rather that you will not lose anything, but that you will obtain infinitely more by bestowing this perishable charity, provided you give it from a good heart, with faith in the Recompenser, and not from love of gain or any self-loving motives. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me,"[2] your Lord.

The thoughts of a man have the most powerful influence upon the state and inclinations of his heart and actions; therefore, in order that the heart may be pure, good, tranquil, and that the inclinations of the will may be also good and pious, it is necessary to cleanse our thoughts by means of prayer, by reading the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Holy Fathers, as well as by meditations on the perishableness, transitoriness, and complete disappearance of earthly delights.

You desire some spiritual blessing, either for yourself or someone else, or for all, but the Lord desires the same, long, long before you, and is ready to grant this blessing to you and others; only readiness to accept the Divine gift is required; it only requires some worthiness in those who are to receive it, for God is infinite mercy, infinite goodness, and is always ready to grant every blessing, and often bestows it even before we ask for it, and, in every case, "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."[3] Therefore, it is always with hope and boldness that I ask spiritual and even material blessings of the Lord, when these latter are needful, and the Lord grants

[1] Ephesians iv. 27. [2] St. Matthew xxv. 40. [3] Ephesians iii. 20.

them, in accordance with His faithful promise: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." [1]

After the resurrection our bodies will be spiritual, and not earthly ones, everything earthly will remain upon earth. Remembering what our future abode will be, Christians, let us, then, gradually detach ourselves from everything earthly. In the resurrection of the dead, men shall be "as the angels of God in heaven"[2]—as spiritual as they! And therefore, there will be neither meat, nor drink, nor raiment, nor air, nor warmth—which nourish, warm and support our bodies here; "but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."[3] Now our earthly bodies are supported by the earth, that is, by earthly elements, but then all "the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."[4] And thus remembering these future changes in our destiny, in our bodies, and in our lives, "and the wonder of seeing God incarnate, let us shun the vain world, and set our minds upon Divine things: Christ came upon earth, in order to raise us up to heaven."[5] The spiritual body is entirely different from the material, elemental one. "That God may be all in all."[6]

As the Lord has formed us of two elements—the spiritual and the material, of a reasonable soul and a material body requiring material support, the Devil, in spite of God and ourselves, endeavours by every means to take advantage of this very duality of our nature, by inclining us to put our trust, not in God, but in carnal things, and tempting us, through the flesh, to every sin: to gluttony, fornication and every impurity; to covetousness, envy, slothfulness, theft, avarice, hatred, murder. Thus, for instance, he incites us, he makes us trust, not in God, but in money, food and drink, human ties and connections, ranks, honours and privileges, nobility of birth, intellect, education, books; he incites us to find pleasure in food, drink, dress, in concerts of worldly music, theatres, joking, idle-speaking, and in the play of words. But the true servant of God trusts in his Lord, always and in everything, in the common Father and Provider of all, Who worketh all things in all, remembering what has been said: "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."[7] As soon as disturbance and violence arise in your

[1] St. Matthew vii. 7, 8. [2] St. Matthew xxii. 30. [3] Romans xiv. 17.
[4] 2 Peter iii. 10. [5] Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus.
[6] 1 Corinthians xv. 28. [7] 1 Peter v. 7.

soul, recognise in this the influence of Satan, and immediately set against him the Rock—Christ. Satan will break his teeth against that Rock, and shall not reach you. But also bear in mind that you must love everyone as yourself.

Our Lady, the Mother of God, the Angels and all the Saints are as near to me when I call upon them with a pure, whole heart as my own soul, and hear me, as I hear myself: for we are all—one body, one spirit, one Church of Angels and men. The members of the Church have the same relation to each other as the members of the body: they serve each other, they help each other, support and save each other. (But is it thus with the Protestants?)

In what high, holy company does the Christian find himself in the temple, surrounded by images of Angels and Saints! He is a member of that same Church to which the Saints belong. What an incitement to moral change and aspiration towards the life that never ages, to which they too aspired, and to which they actually attained.

The Devil takes captive and conquers man in this world by excessively exciting his natural spiritual and bodily needs, such as: the need of food and drink (and as everything has to be bought with money, therefore of money, too), the need of clothing, the need of pleasures, the need of honours or fame, and of a good name. All these and other similar requirements of man, which God has put into the very nature of man, are continually perverted by the Devil, who carries them to extremes, sometimes quite needlessly (for instance, with eating and drinking), and thus ruins both soul and body, and diverts the soul from God through its attachment to material things, and through its falling into sensuality and into the passions of malice, pride, envy, despondency, slothfulness, gluttony, fornication, drunkenness, covetousness, ambition, etc. And therefore fasting, chastity, disinterestedness, kindness, meekness, humility, faith, hope and love, prayer and meditation, are necessary.

Guard by every means your heart, or the sincerity of your heart, your capability of sympathising with your neighbours in their joys and sorrows, and avoid, as you would avoid mortal poison, any indifference and coldness to people's various misfortunes, sicknesses, and needs: for it is by sympathy, especially active sympathy, that the love and goodness of the Christian are revealed, and in love the whole law is contained, whilst, on the contrary, our selfishness, malice, malevolence, and envy are revealed by a want of sympathy. Thus, pray for all those for

whom the Church orders you to pray, or, pray willingly for others, as you would pray for yourself, and do not relax in sincerity, do not lose inward respect for the person or persons for whom you pray; do not allow the holy fire of love to be extinguished, or your light darkened; do not despond at the wiles of the enemy, undermining your heart and striving to implant in your heart an aversion to all, to take away from your lips the prayer for others which is the best proof of evangelical love for our brethren.

Lord! grant that Thy temple may communicate to all who enter into it with faith, piety and fear of God, the enlightenment of their souls, the cleansing from their sins, sanctification, peace, health, tranquillity of soul—that it may strengthen their faith, hope and love; that it may further the amendment of their lives, success in all their good beginnings and works, mutual love, pure Christian life, the softening of their hearts, and the cessation of self-love, hard-heartedness, covetousness, greediness, envy, malice, gluttony, drunkenness, dissoluteness—of these vices, which which are so prejudicial to social life, sapping its very foundations. Grant this, grant it, Lord, to all those who love to frequent Thy temple, and incline those also who do not love it, to love it, and to amend their lives and works: for the time is near and the judgment is at the door for all, of every calling and position, of either sex and every age, and a work of infinite importance stands before all—to give an answer at the terrible Judgment of Christ.

How and when are we to care for the imperishable raiment of the soul: meekness, righteousness, chastity, patience, mercy, when all our cares, attention, and means are directed to perishable raiment and the adornment of our body? We cannot serve two masters: for the soul is simple and single. How and when are we to care for the spiritual riches of good works, when we are only greedy after perishable riches and strive to amass it with all our might and means, when our heart clings to money, to the world, and not to God? How and when are we to care for the incorruptible spiritual food and for the blessed drink—for prayer, the reading of God's word, the writings and lives of the Holy Fathers, the Communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord, when we hardly let food and drink out of our mouths, and this stupefying lit-up poisonous smoke which many consider so pleasant? How can our soul rejoice in the Holy Ghost, when we are continually occupied by earthly, vain pastimes and pleasures? O, ruinous service to corruption, drawing us away from the life incorruptible, true and eternal!

When we pray, then the holiest, highest subjects are strangely intermingled in our thoughts with earthly, worldly, trifling subjects. For instance, God and some object we love, such as money, dress, a hat, or some dainty dish, some sweet drink, or else some outward distinction, such as a cross, an order, a ribbon, etc. So heedless, so given over to the passions, and distracted are we! This ought to be natural only to the heathen, who do not know the true God and His Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, and not to Christians, whose treasure is not upon earth, but in heaven. Where, then, is the living water in our heart, springing forth in life-giving streams in hearts wholly devoted to God? It is not there, because it is thrust out of our hearts by worldly vanities and other passions. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon,"[1] says the Truth.

There is a close relation between the image and its Prototype—between a pious man and God; between the members and the Head; between the flock and the Shepherd; between the Vine and the branches. If we always believed and remembered this truth, O! in what accord, in what love and purity, we should live; how compassionate we should be to one another, how indulgent, how forgiving, knowing that we ourselves, before all, are in need of both God's and man's indulgence and mercy, as being most infirm in spirit and body.

The meaning of grace. What is grace? It is the blessed power of God, given to the man who believes and who was baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ, or in that of the Holy Trinity—the power that cleanses, sanctifies, enlightens, that helps in doing good and withdraws from evil, that comforts and gives courage in misfortunes, sorrows and sicknesses, that is a pledge of receiving the everlasting blessings, prepared by God in heaven for His chosen ones. Has a proud, selfish, malicious, envious person become meek, humble, and self-denying for the sake of the glory of God and the good of his neighbour, benevolent towards all, indulgent, yielding, without connivance—he has become so by the power of grace. Has an unbeliever become a believing and zealous fulfiller of the precepts of religion—he has become so by the power of grace. Has a money-loving, covetous, unjust man, hard-hearted to the poor, changed in the depths of his soul, and become unmercenary, just, generous, compassionate—he owes it to the power of the grace of Christ. Has a glutton, a great eater and drinker, become abstinent, temperate, not through illness or any

[1] St. Matthew vi. 24.

consciousness of the harmfulness of intemperance to the body, but from the consciousness of a moral, higher purpose—he has become so by the power of grace. Has anyone that was previously full of hatred, rancour and revenge suddenly become benevolent, loving even his enemies, his ill-wishers and revilers, not remembering any offences—he has become so by the regenerating, changing, and renewing power of grace. Has anyone that was formerly cold towards God, towards the temple, the Divine service, to prayer, and in general to the Sacraments of religion, which cleanse and strengthen our souls and bodies, suddenly changed in his soul, and become fervent towards God, to Divine service and prayer, reverent towards the Sacraments—he has become so by the action of the saving grace of God. From this it is evident that many live without grace, not recognising its importance and indispensability, and do not seek it, although the word of the Lord says: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."[1] Many live in plenty and ease, enjoy blooming health, eat with pleasure, drink, walk, amuse themselves, write or work in the various branches of human activity, but they have not the grace of God in their hearts, that priceless treasure of the Christian, without which no one can be a true Christian and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

Amongst Christians both the sciences and literature have now become almost wholly worldly. The Gospel and religion are neglected, the lives of the saints are scoffed at, in general there is everywhere a kind of feverish, worldly activity, whilst no one thinks of pleasing God and of the salvation of his soul. What a pitiable condition!

Our modern idolatry in Christianity consists in self-love, ambition, worldly pleasures, gluttony and love of gain, adultery. It is this that has completely turned away our eyes and hearts from God and the heavenly country, and has nailed us to the earth. It is this that has uprooted brotherly love, and has set us against one another. Woe! woe! unto us!

How do we receive the highest mystery of Divine love to us —the mystery of the Christian faith? With our mind, heart and life; with our free will? Are all the three powers of our souls penetrated by holy faith, as were the souls of the saints? . . . . The kingdom of heaven "is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal [the

[1] St. Matthew vi. 33.

three powers of the soul] till the whole was leavened."[1] We receive worldly, transitory, sinful things (sensuality, covetousness, and ambition), with all the powers of our souls and bodies, but not heavenly and eternal things.

The Lord God has, so to say, shared His eternal life with us: we are all made godly by His most pure Body and Blood, united to the Divinity. "I have said ye are gods: and ye are all the children of the most Highest"[2] (Our Father, Which art in heaven). Ought not we also, in accordance with His will, to share that which serves to the support of our souls and bodies, our mind, our knowledge, our material property, with our neighbours, for did not He Himself promise us, not a diminution, but an increase of the talents entrusted to us and returned by us? "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."[3] If God has received us into communion with the Divinity, into the communion of His Body and Blood, then we, likewise, ought to have all things in common, without, however, encouraging idleness and slothfulness—that is, the rich should help the poor, bestowing as much charity as possible; they should receive strangers, visit the sick, comfort the afflicted, instruct the ignorant, teach the erring, forgive offences, remembering that we are all Christ's. And Christ shall recompense for all and for everything. "For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat."[4] And so on.

The cross and the sign of the cross are the power of God; this is why the Lord is always present in them. Similarly the icons of the Lord, of the Mother of God, of the holy angels and saints, may also possess the power of God for believers, and may accomplish miracles upon them. Why? Because, by the grace of God, the Lord, the Holy Virgin, the angels or saints, are present in them—that is, they are always as near us, and even nearer, than these images. Truly so. Experience very often confirms this.

What do theatres bring into the hearts of men? The spirit of this world, the spirit of idleness, of idle speaking, of joking, of cunning, and wickedness, of pride, presumption—they do not bring any moral good to anyone. The authors of the pieces and the actors only give people what they have in themselves, their own spirit, neither more nor less. And do the actors think of public morality? Have they any intention of correcting people's morals? None whatever.

[1] St. Luke xiii. 21.
[2] Psalm lxxxii. 6.
[3] St. Matthew vii. 2.
[4] St. Matthew xxv. 35.

Always consider it a great happiness to converse in prayer with the Lord, or with our most pure Lady the Mother of God, or with the angels and saints, and always pray to them with trembling reverence, remembering with Whom you are conversing, you, an impure, insignificant worm.

Why has our sincere prayer for each other such great power over others? Because of the fact that by cleaving to God during prayer I become one spirit with Him, and unite with myself, by faith and love, those for whom I pray, for the Holy Ghost acting in me also acts at the same time in them, for He accomplishes all things. "We, being many, are one bread, and one body." [1] "There is one Body and one Spirit." [2]

The spiritual tranquillity and blessedness which we sometimes experience in God's temple during the harmonious singing and the distinct reading of the reader, or of the officiating clergy, is a foretaste of that infinite bliss which those will experience who will eternally contemplate the unspeakable goodness of God's countenance. We must be zealous about harmonious singing and distinct reading. By calling upon the names of God's saints in prayer, we move them to pray for us.

When entering the temple of God to pray, we should know and remember that we are the children of the Heavenly Father, and have come into His house; therefore we must stand there with son-like feelings of sincere love and gratitude in fervent prayer. Our spirit should cry, "Abba, Father!" [3]

How good Thou art, Lord, and how near art Thou to us —so near that we may always converse with Thee, be comforted by Thee, breathe through Thee, be enlightened by Thee, find peace in Thee, obtain spiritual breadth in Thee Lord! teach me simplicity of love for Thee and my neighbour, so that I may ever be with Thee, that I may ever find peace in Thee. Lord! grant that I may not for a single moment have fellowship with the most abominable, most evil enemy the Devil, neither by malice, nor pride, nor envy, nor avarice, nor by love of gain, nor gluttony, nor impure thoughts, nor blasphemy, nor despondency, nor falsehood, nor by anything sinful. Grant that I may ever be wholly Thine!

My infinite Blessedness, Lord Jesus Christ, of what blessings hast Thou not made me a partaker during my temporal existence!

[1] 1 Corinthians x. 17. [2] Ephesians iv. 4. [3] Romans viii. 15.

I thank Thee, my Mercy, my Blessedness. But if earthly blessings are so numerous, so various, so sweet—then what must heavenly, spiritual blessings be: they are more truly infinite, numberless, unimaginably sweet. Do not deprive me, then, most merciful and most gracious Lord, of these Thy heavenly blessings, too, which Thou hast prepared for those who love Thee. Do not deprive others of them either! Grant that they may all know Thee, Lord, our Blessedness! For Thou art our Blessedness everywhere, upon earth, too, for every blessing is Thy work! And besides this, grant, Lord, that I may also submissively bear the afflictions of this life: they are necessary for my passionate flesh, for my old man. Lover of men! teach the rest of Thy people also to bear them submissively, and grant that they may learn the need of them. "Patient in tribulation."[1] "In the world ye shall have tribulation."[2]

When you ask for life, faith, and spiritual understanding for others, do you ask sincerely, not hypocritically, only with your tongue? Do you desire from all your soul that they should progress in these? Are you yourself progressing in the same? Do not you yourself remain in the bondage of the passions? Beware, the Master sees everything with His clearest eyes; it is necessary to pray to Him with understanding, in the simplicity of your heart, with a fervent spirit.

When owing to sickness, proceeding from various causes, you feel unwell and indisposed, and when in this condition your prayer is cold, heavy, filled with despondency and even despair, do not be disheartened or despairing, for the Lord knows your sick and painful condition. Struggle against your infirmity, pray as much as you have strength to, and the Lord will not despise the infirmity of your flesh and spirit.

When you feel yourself to be an impious, impure, wicked, blasphemous sinner, and, therefore, do not feel worthy to draw near to Our Lady and pray to Her, then is the very time to pray fervently to Her, just because you feel yourself such a sinner; do not lie in the mire of sin, but come to Our Lady, stand before Her image in the hope that She Herself is there present, show Her without shame your sinful sores, have a loathing for them, and ask Her to cleanse you from this spiritual leprosy, and you shall not be shamed. The all-merciful One will not despise you, the most pure and the most speedy Helper will cleanse you, as the Lord Himself cleansed the ten lepers.

[1] Romans xii. 12. [2] St. John xvi. 33.

Where shall I find the Christian who by his actions teaches others to despise the flesh, as soon passing away, and to care for the immortal soul? Where shall I find a man of such an elevated spirit? It is hard to find such a one on earth, though certainly there are some such, but in the "Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven," in the heavenly Church, there are as many such men as there are stars in heaven. By renouncing themselves, the old corrupt, lost man, the broken vessel that cannot contain any water, they have taken up their crosses and followed Christ, they have given up their whole lives to Him, despising the flesh and the world as transitory. They heard the voice saying, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"[1] and they knew that the flesh and the world shall pass away and shall be no more; that our soul is priceless, because, being an image of God, it is immortal, and that, therefore, the whole world is worth nothing in comparison with the soul, that it is transitory, for "Heaven and earth shall pass away,"[2] according to the word of the Saviour. Besides, at every step, with our own eyes, we become convinced of the transitoriness of the world: everything in the world moves and revolves, and all the elements are in motion, the seasons of the year change—whilst with men, some are born, some die, some marry, others lose their wives, some build themselves houses, whilst others are deprived of their dwellings and property; some towns extend and are embellished, whilst others are destroyed by fire and reduced to ashes. Everything upon earth passes away, and this shows that the earth itself shall some day also pass away. If everything in the house takes fire, then the house itself will be burnt. "The heavens and the earth are . . . reserved unto fire. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."[3] Where, then, shall I find true Christians, who despise everything earthly as transitory, and strive with all their might to please God their eternal Father, and to save their souls? Where shall I find a man of such lofty spirit that, like some king or god, he would despise everything earthly for God's sake, and would bravely subdue to this reason or to the law of God all worldly passions and attachments? Who would be zealous with God's zeal for the salvation of his brethren, and would care for their enlightenment, cleansing, and strengthening in faith and virtue? Lord! raise such lights on the candelabrum of this world, on the candelabrum of Thy Church, that they may preach Thy glory, that they may be zealous of Thy glory and of the salvation of

[1] St. Matthew xvi. 26. [2] St. Mark xiii. 31. [3] 2 Peter iii. 7.

Thy people! Lord, all things are possible unto Thee! Lord, how long shall the vanity of this world move? How long shall we turn away from Thee, our Creator and Saviour? Lord, let all things concerning us be ordered according to Thy will!

When a strange, proud, evil spirit disturbs you before or during the reading of the prayers to the Lord God, or to the Mother of God, then represent vividly to yourself that all those present in the temple are the children of the heavenly, almighty, unoriginate, infinite, most merciful Father, and that the Lord is their Father, and pray to Him boldly, peacefully, joyfully, freely, before the face of all men, fearing neither mockery nor contempt, nor the malice of the children of this world. Do not be crafty nor ashamed before the face of man; do not doubt, but pray sincerely to the Heavenly Father; especially say the Lord's Prayer, reverently, peacefully, not hurriedly: in general, read all the prayers quietly, evenly, with reverence, knowing before Whom you are saying them.

How many Christians there are who say, "I believe in God," without in reality believing! How many mouths are dumb when in the company of men it is necessary to defend the glory of God and of His saints, which is blasphemed by the children of this world! Some remain silent when it is necessary to support the conversation concerning God, or to put a stop to any disrespect or insolence. Many say, "I believe in God"; but should any misfortune or temptation arise, they grow faint-hearted and despondent. Sometimes they begin to murmur. And what becomes of all their faith? This should be the very time to show submission to the will of God, and to say, "Let it be as the Lord wills." "Blessed be the name of the Lord."[1] Otherwise it is evident that they only believe in God in the time of happiness, and renounce Him in the time of misfortune.

Bear the sufferings and painful smarts of the operation so that you may regain your health afterwards (this is said in reference to confession). It means that at confession you must declare all your shameful deeds to your confessor, without concealment, though to do so may be painful, shameful, ignominious, and humiliating. Otherwise the wound will remain unhealed, will ache and be painful, will undermine your spiritual health, and remain as a leaven for other spiritual infirmities, or sinful habits and passions. A priest is a spiritual physician. Show him your wounds, without being ashamed, sincerely, openly, with son-like trust and confidence; for the confessor is your spiritual father, who should love you more than your own

[1] Job i. 21.

father and mother; for Christ's love is higher than any carnal, natural love. He must give an answer to God for you. Why has our life become so impure, so full of passions and sinful habits? Because a great many conceal their spiritual wounds and sores, owing to which they ache and become inflamed; and it is impossible to apply any remedy to them.

Let heaven and earth, created by the Lord, and existing, acting, and moving through Him, teach me—I, who am one spirit with the Lord! What is there for me to grieve at, when I am, and can ever be, one spirit with the Lord? I will cast all my care upon Him. Heaven and earth exist for thousands of years through the Lord, through His power and laws, though they are soulless, inert, inactive, and powerless matter. And the grass, the flowers of the field, the birds, fishes, etc. How all these teach us to entirely trust in God's providence!

Do not despise any man, however poor he may be; but behave with full respect and kindness to every well-intentioned man, especially to the poor, as to our members worthy of compassion—or, rather, to members of Christ—otherwise you will cruelly wound your soul. O, how easy it would appear to be to live in simplicity and love, and yet how difficult it is for our corrupt hearts to live in love! At every step there is a pretext for enmity against our brother.

Lord! I am Thy vessel: fill me with the gifts of Thy Holy Spirit. Without Thee I am void of every blessing—or, rather, full of every sin. Lord! I am Thy ship: fill me with the cargo of good works. Lord! I am Thy ark: fill me, not with the allurement of love of money and pleasures, but with love for Thee and Thy living image, man.

Man! how high has your nature been raised in the person of Jesus Christ, the God-man? It has been raised to the throne of the Godhead. To what height has your nature been raised in the person of the Mother of God? Higher than the Cherubim and Seraphim. For whom was this done? For you, in order that you, being freed from the corruption of the lusts of the flesh, might become a partaker of the Divine nature. And how do you answer these intentions, this most merciful providence of your Lord? All the Divine powers for life and godliness have been given you, and how do you avail yourself of them? Are you not careless of them? Do you not cling wholly to the earth, like a snail?

Our soul is simple, as the image and likeness of God;

therefore, when it is well-regulated and is living in accordance with the will of God, then it is peaceful, easy, and joyous; whilst, on the contrary, when it consents to sin, commits sin, or is forced into sin by the Enemy, then it becomes disturbed, darkened, and heavy. Thus, always do the will of God, and you will be simple and quiet; but if you sin you will have no peace. Do not yield to the Enemy; he brings anguish, straitness, darkness, and fire into the soul. "Put away the evil of your doings."[1]

As it is natural, sweet, and easy to breathe the air, so it ought to be natural, sweet, and easy to breathe by the Holy Ghost, Which is the breath of our soul. As it is natural, easy, and pleasant to love ourselves, so it ought to be natural, easy, and pleasant to love all men, for we are all one—one creation of the one God, images and likenesses of the same God; we have the same breath, the same soul, the same appearance.

All sorrows, sicknesses, torments, deprivations, are allowed by God in order to drive out the enticement of sin, and to implant true virtue in the heart, that we may learn by experience the falsehood, insolence, tyranny, and deadliness of sin, and may be inspired with a loathing for it; also that we may learn by experience the truth of meekness, wisdom, of gently ruling the hearts of men, and of the life-giving properties of virtue. Therefore, I will bear all afflictions courageously, with gratitude to the Lord, the Physician of our souls, our Most-loving Saviour.

The Lord is everywhere and in all things; the Lord carries and keeps everything; and therefore He is called Almighty. I ought to be free from care. We are called into being out of nothingness by the omnipotence of God, and as we are nothing of ourselves, we cannot do anything by our own strength; without God we cannot even support ourselves in life, because God is everything to us: our life, our strength, our light, our air, our spiritual meat and drink, our raiment, our all. It is He also Who has created and gives us everything for our material body: light, air, warmth, food, drink, clothing, and dwelling. Blessed are the poor in spirit, who ever acknowledge their own nothingness—and the omnipotence of God; blessed are those who are free from care in this life; blessed are the simple-hearted; blessed are those who commend themselves in all things into the hands of God. "Let us commend ourselves, and each other, and all our life to Christ

[1] Isaiah i. 16.

our God."[1] Only be always with God and everything shall be given unto you, everything shall be added unto you. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; (in yourself and in others) and all these things shall be added unto you."[2] Only let God be in your hearts, ever be inseparably united to Him, and all earthly things shall be added unto you. Only do not set your heart upon anything worldly, for your part is—God, the God of your heart. God is inexhaustible riches, an everflowing source; where God is, there is every blessing. Those who love God are followed by all blessings, as the shadow follows the body.

How can I be cold to my neighbour when the Lord commanded me to love him as myself, or as He Himself has loved us? But we often become cold to our neighbour because we attach ourselves to earthly delights, and are self-loving. And, therefore, let us renounce earthly delights, self-love, and intemperance, so that we may please our Lord.

Were it not for the Lord and Our Lady, were it not for the guardian angels and the saints, the Devil and his agents would have stopped the mouths of us all, and would not have let us praise the Name of the Lord; it would certainly have been so, for even now they endeavour to do so, and, sometimes, to a certain extent, succeed. Who is it that hinders priests during their service? The Devil.

We must never forget that we are all one body, and that we should stimulate each other to love and good works; we pastors should especially remember and do this. Yes, we should remember that if our own souls are serene, if we stand firm in faith and piety ourselves, then our flock, too, will be firmer, more serene, and of purer life; if the head is bright and clear, the members are also bright and clear; but if our souls are darkened by manifold passions, the darker, too, will become the body of the Church, our flock, because there is a close connection between the head and the members, between the pastor and his flock. This is why the Lord said: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven."[3] "If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"[4] And, therefore, do not think that your flock do not feel the effects of your gluttony, your love of money; they do so, in the first place, through your negligence of their souls, for what care of souls can he have who himself

[1] From the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom.
[2] St. Matthew vi. 33.
[3] St. Matthew v. 16.
[4] St. Matthew vi. 23.

cares about money? None. Yes, if the light darkens in the pastor himself, it darkens also in his flock, through his close spiritual connection with it, like the head with the members. If you stand firm in spiritual virtues, they are also firm; if you are fervent in prayer and pray fervently for them, they feel this too; if you are spiritually strengthened yourself, they too are strengthened; if you grow weak, they too become weak. Lord, have mercy upon me!

Our body consists of earthly elements: light, heat, air, water, and earth; it will be dissolved into these same elements after its death. The light and heat will be united to light and heat, the air to air, the water to water, the earth to earth. We are formed and dissolved again. Glory to Thy creative power, Lord! Let us know and remember our earthliness, the shortness of our time, and reverence the Creator. We are all the work of His hands, "the sheep of His pasture."[1]

Our life is an uninterrupted stream of God's unspeakable mercies; therefore, it should be continual thankfulness and praise to God the Creator and Benefactor; our love for God and our neighbour, God's image and our fellow-member should especially be constant. By loving our neighbour we love God; by respecting every man, we respect the image of God and ourselves; for our brother is another fifth, tenth, hundredth, thousandth, millionth repetition of ourselves. There are many leaves on a tree, but all are one tree; they live the same life, have the same origin, the same appearance, the same beginning, and the same end.

If you doubt whether any particular icon of the Mother of God before which you pray has been sanctified or not, know that Our Lady, the Prototype of this image, was already sanctified nineteen hundred years ago, even in the bosom of Her parents, Joakim and Anna, afterwards at Her birth, and in the temple of Jerusalem, and finally by the indescribable Incarnation of God the Word of Her; She is ever holy and eternally, immovably, unchangeably, most holy; She is in every place, and present in every icon of Hers; by the delineation of Her face and name alone, and of the face and name of the Saviour, the material object is already sanctified by the delineation of Her face and name. Gaze, then, upon every icon in simplicity of heart, for any doubt proceeds from the Devil in order to divert you from heartfelt prayer. Say to him: the whole earth is holy; the power of my Lord, and of His most pure Mother—the Queen of the whole world—is in every place; I gaze upon Her,

[1] Psalm c. 2.

the most pure One, with my spiritual eyes, and I do not worship a board: Her representation is only made to help my infirmity.

The wonder-working icons of the Mother of God, and of other saints, teach us to look upon every icon as upon the saint himself or herself to whom we pray as living persons conversing with us, for they are as near, and still nearer to us than the icons, if only we pray to them with faith and sincerity. It is the same with the life-giving cross. Where the cross is, or the sign of the cross, there is Christ Himself, His power and His salvation only make the sign of the cross or worship the cross with faith.

When you pray to God by means of prayers that you know, to which you have grown accustomed, say in your heart: Lord! Thou art ever the same. My heart changes and grows cold to the words of the prayer, but yet their power remains the same, Thou, too, art eternally The Same.

When you pray to God—you converse with Him face to face; therefore, converse with Him as with a king, face to face; likewise, converse with the heavenly Queen, and the angels and saints as though face to face, and do not, on any account, at that time, allow your heart to be occupied by and attached to anything irrelevant, for say: Would you, when speaking with a king or queen, be occupied at that time with anything irrelevant or unimportant; would you, for instance, at such a time, look out of the window and watch the passers-by, or would you look at the objects in the room, and so on? Would not this be the greatest offence to the royal majesty? How dare we, then, do so, and much worse when we converse with the Lord?

Afflictions are a great teacher; afflictions show us our weaknesses, passions, and the need of repentance; afflictions cleanse the soul, they make it sober, as from drunkenness, they bring down grace into the soul, they soften the heart, they inspire us with a loathing for sin, and strengthen us in faith, hope, and virtue.

The material objects to which we attach ourselves in our hearts, which we passionately desire or grudge others, kill the soul by withdrawing it from God, the Source of life. The heart ought to be always in God, Who is the inexhaustible Source of spiritual and material life: for who is the author of the existence of all creatures, and of organic, vegetable and animal life, of the existence, order and life of all worlds, both great and small? The Lord God. We must look upon everything material as

dross, as unimportant, as nothingness, as transitory, destructible, corruptible, and evanescent, and pay attention to the invisible, single, immortal soul which cannot be destroyed: "To despise the flesh, for it passeth away, and to take care for the soul, the thing immortal."[1] Prove this by your deeds; fast, gladly bestow charity upon the poor, entertain guests heartily; do not grudge anything to those who belong to your household, zealously read the Word of God, pray, repent, lament your sins, strive with all your might after holiness, meekness, humility, patience, and obedience.

How do we maintain connection with the spiritual world, with the heavenly Church? By calling upon them in prayer; by keeping the festivals instituted in their honour; and by the Church services. For the Church is one, under one Head—Christ. How do we maintain connection with the departed? By means of prayers for them, especially when united with the offering of the bloodless sacrifice. How do we maintain union with living Christians and with all men? Again, by means of prayers for them all in God's temple and even at home. Thus we maintain connection with those in heaven, upon earth, and in hades. Great is the Christian faith!

In the actual world there appears on one side an infinity of material things, of animate and inanimate material creatures; on the other side, an infinite world of thought and feeling, or of the sinful foolishness and unfeelingness, or of sinful and passionate thought and feeling. But all materiality is nothing, whilst one single gracious thought in a man, one single feeling of holy love, is infinitely more precious than all materiality.

As soon as you have told the Lord your sins with a contrite heart, they melt away: as soon as you have sighed and sorrowed for your sins, they are no more. "Tell thine iniquities, that thou mayest be justified." As they came, so they go away. They are an illusion. As soon as you have recognised that they are an illusion, an absurdity, a madness; as soon as you have formed the resolution to do righteously in the future, God cleanses you of them, through His minister and the Holy Mysteries.

Christ, as the Life-giver, as the All-perfect God, as the Creator, as the Provider, Guardian, and Saviour, is wholly sufficient for me, for the fulness of my life, and no material things are needful for my immaterial heart; they are only needful for the perishable and transitory body, but by the grace

[1] Troparion to a Venerable Man.

of God, and thanks to His bounties, even the body has what is daily and habitually necessary for it. The lusts and whims of the flesh, of the old man, are innumerable, but they are illusions, vanity, phantoms, nothing; they are darkness, giddiness, and the shipwreck of the soul. My peace and my life are in God alone.

What a close connection there is between the Church in heaven and the Church upon earth! What love the Church has! See: she unceasingly remembers, calls upon in prayer, and glorifies the Church in heaven for the great deeds accomplished on earth for God's sake; she unceasingly prays for the Church upon earth, and intercedes for the departed, in the hope of the resurrection, of the life eternal, and of union with God and the Saints. Her love is immense, grand, divine! Let us enter into the spirit of this love of our Mother, the orthodox Church, and let us be penetrated with the spirit of this love. Let us look upon all our brethren as our own members, upon ourselves and them as members of the one body of the Church, and let us love them actively, as ourselves; then we ourselves shall be living members of the Church in heaven, and she will be our active and speedy helper and intercessor.

As long as we lead a carnal life and do not heartily draw near to God, so long will the demons hide themselves within us, concealing themselves under the form of various passions: greediness after food and drink, adulterous passion, pride, and arrogant free thought concerning religion, concerning the Church, and the dogmas of faith, malice, envy, avarice, covetousness, so that we live in accordance with their will; but as soon as we begin to truly serve the Lord, and thus provoke and strike home at the demons of our passions nestling in us, then they take up arms against us with all their infernal malice, with all their fiery inflammability and manifold violent, burning attachments to earthly things, until we drive them out of us by fervent prayer or by the Communion of the Holy Sacrament. Thus, it sometimes happens that those who are possessed with evil spirits remain tranquil until they are brought near something holy, but as soon as they approach it they are overtaken by an extraordinary power, by a repulsion for the holy thing, by blasphemy, by spitting at the holy thing, by piercing screams. This is the explanation of the fact why those possessed with evil spirits scream in church during Divine service or when they approach the relics of saints; it is because the demons are met by the blessed power, which is hateful to them and stronger than them, which burns, oppresses, strikes them righteously, and drives them out of their beloved dwellings.

Every Christian house in itself represents an infinitely large house—the universe, heaven and earth, in which the Lord dwells. It is for this reason that one sees in every Christian house representations of the Saviour and of the Mother of God, listening to the prayers of those who live in the house and who call upon Them.

Man! recognise your spiritual misfortune, and steadfastly, continually pray to the Saviour of men, that He may save you from it. Do not say to yourself, "I am not in danger; I am not in misery; I do not require to pray much and often to be saved from a misfortune which I do not even understand and know." This is the very misfortune, that you, being in the greatest misery, do not know your misfortune; this misfortune is your sins.

If it falls to you to have to bear great misfortunes, sorrows, and sicknesses, do not grow faint-hearted or despondent; do not murmur; do not desire death for yourself; and do not speak audaciously before the all-seeing God—as, for instance: "O, what a cruel affliction!" "O, what an unbearable misfortune; let me rather die!" or "I would rather kill myself!" God save you from such faint-heartedness, murmuring, and audacity! But endure all this courageously, as having been sent to you from God for your sins; repeat with the wise malefactor, "We receive the due reward of our deeds,"[1] and contemplate with your mental eyes the Saviour suffering on the cross.

Beware, lest the floods of inward sorrows and afflictions should draw you away from the Lord Jesus Christ, for the enemy endeavours by every means to turn us aside from the Lord: both by the enticement of pleasures and by the weight of misfortunes, like Job, and especially by inward distresses and afflictions. Endure everything, thanking God, for "all things work together for good to them that love God."[2] Remember that you yourself daily confess in prayer to God that, by your sins, by which you continually anger the Lord and His Most-pure Mother and all the heavenly Powers and your holy Guardian Angel, you are not worthy of His love and compassion, but deserve every condemnation and punishment, and thus the Lord only shows His justice upon you as well as His love by visiting you with sorrows and distresses, humiliation and shame, in order to cleanse your heart, to soften and refine it, to humble it and make it His worthy temple. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless,

[1] St. Luke xxiii. 41. [2] Romans viii. 28.

afterward it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." [1]

The sin, to which you do not consent, is not "imputed" to you, as, for instance: involuntary distraction during prayer, impure and blasphemous thoughts, involuntary malice, against which we zealously struggle, avarice, which we resist—all such are attacks of the spirit of evil. Our duty is to endure, to pray, to humble ourselves, and to love.

O, sweetest name, holiest name, almighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ! My victory, Lord, glory to Thee! Lord, we are Thy members, we are one body, Thou art our Head! Lord, grant that all passions, all demons may flee from us! Lord, bestow upon us the grace of never failing love! Lord, grant that we may show respect and love to each other, as to Thyself, for we are made godly by Thee.

What blessings Thy chosen ones will enjoy in heaven with Thee, O Lord! How wearisome to the heart are all earthly delights! How destructive to the heart is even a momentary attachment to anything earthly! And what peace, what freedom, what width, what light, what joy is to be found in Thee!

Glory to the never failing power of Thy cross, O Lord! When the enemy oppresses me by sinful thoughts and feelings, and I, having no freedom in my heart, make the sign of the cross several times with faith, then my sin suddenly passes away from me, the straitness vanishes, and I obtain freedom. Glory to Thee, Lord! Lord, let nothing, nothing carnal, material, turn me away from Thee! Let me always be with Thee! How good it is to be with Thee!

O Lord! Deprive me not of Thy heavenly gifts, for Thou art the Lord and canst do so if Thou willest; O Lord, save me from eternal torments, for Thou art the Lord and canst also easily do so if Thou willest; O Lord, be it in mind, or thought, in word or deed that I have sinned, forgive me, seeing the infirmity of my soul. Thus, Lord, Thou canst do all things for me, repentant and asking Thy blessings. And Thou, Queen of all the angels and men, all-merciful and all-succouring as the terrible Sovereign, the disperser and flame of all resisting powers, who canst so easily destroy, with the speed of lightning, all the manifold snares of the evil spirits,—save us from every sin and strengthen us by Thy power in every virtue; make us conformable to Thy Son and our God, and to Thyself, Most holy

[1] Hebrews xii. 6, 11.

Virgin, Mother of our Lord, for we bear the name of Christ, Thy Son, as His members. Let not our name of "Christians" be an empty sound, void of power; but may we all be imitators of Christ, the "Author . . . of our faith,"[1] and of Thee, the "First Origin of spiritual renovation."[2] May we all be as "lively stones, . . . built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God."[3] O Sovereign Lady!—may we not call Thee by that name in vain: manifest upon us, now and for ever, Thy holy, living, active sovereignty. Do so, for the all-merciful Mother of the all-merciful King; Thou canst do all that is good; drive away the darkness from our hearts, repel the arrows of the evil spirits, cunningly directed against us. Let the peace of Thy Son, Thy peace reign in our hearts, so that all may joyfully exclaim: Who, after the Lord, is like unto Our Lady, our all-merciful, all-succouring, and most speedy Mediatrix? Therefore, Thou art highly exalted, our Lady; therefore, an unspeakable abundance of grace is given unto Thee, unutterable boldness and power before the throne of God, and the gift of almighty prayer; therefore, Thou art adorned with ineffable holiness and purity; therefore, the Lord has given unto Thee unprecedented power, in order that Thou mightest guard, defend, intercede for, cleanse, and save us, the inheritance of Thy Son and God and Thine own. Save us, then, O Most-pure, the Most-merciful, Most-wise and the Most-helpful! Thou art the Mother of our Saviour, Who, of all names, was above all pleased to be called the Saviour, and Whose very name is Jesus, or Saviour. To us, journeying through this life, it is natural to fall, for we are clothed with the flesh, with its manifold passions; are surrounded by the subcelestial evil spirits, tempting us to sin, and we live in an adulterous and sinful world, tempting us to sin; whilst Thou art above every sin, Thou art the brightest Sun, Thou art Most-pure, Most-merciful, and speedy to succour; it is natural to Thee to cleanse us, defiled by sins, as a mother cleanses her children, if we call upon Thee humbly for help; it is natural for Thee to raise us, who continually fall, to intercede for us, to guard and save us, who are subjected to the calumnies of the evil spirits, and to direct us into the path leading to salvation.

"I am the vine," says the Lord, "ye are the branches,"[4] that is the one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Therefore, as the Lord is holy, so also the Church is holy; as the Lord "is the way, the truth, and the life,"[5] so also is the Church, because the Church is one and the same with the Lord, "His body, of His

[1] Hebrews xii. 2. [2] Acathistos to the Most Holy Mother of God.
[3] 1 Peter ii. 5. [4] St. John xv. 5. [5] St. John xiv. 6.

flesh, and of His bones,"[1] or His "branches," rooted in Him—the living vine, and nourished by Him and growing in Him. Never represent the Church apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, from the Father and the Holy Ghost.

When the enemy strikes your heart with doubt in any word of the Saviour and wounds you, say to yourself inwardly: every word of my God Jesus Christ is life to me, and the poison of doubt shall be cast out from your heart, and your soul will be tranquil and at ease. When you are troubled by doubt in any word or sentence, action, or rite of the Church, again inwardly say to the enemy the words of the Saviour concerning the Church: "When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you" (that is the Church, implanted and spread by the apostles, and especially the pastors and teachers) "into all truth;"[2] and steadfastly believe that according to the Saviour's promise the Holy Ghost shall eternally dwell in her and guide "her into all truth." This signifies that everything in her is truthful and salutary; and, therefore, the Church is called "the pillar and ground of the truth."[3] In the church books, in the words of the Holy Fathers and teachers of the Church, everywhere breathes the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of truth, love, and salvation.

Prayer is the constant feeling of our own spiritual poverty and infirmity, the contemplation in ourselves, in others, and in nature of the works of the great wisdom, mercy, and almighty power of God; prayer is—a continually grateful frame of mind.

Sometimes people call prayer that which is not prayer at all; for instance: a man goes to church, stands there for a time, looks at the icons or at other people, their faces and dress, and says that he has prayed to God; or else he stands before an icon at home, bows his head, says some words he has learnt by heart, without understanding and without feeling, and says that he has prayed, although with his thoughts and heart he has not prayed at all, but was elsewhere with other people and things, and not with God.

"Prayer is the lifting up of the mind and heart to God,"[4] the contemplation of God, the daring converse of the creature with the Creator, the soul reverently standing before Him, as before the King and the Life Itself, giving life to all; the oblivion of everything that surrounds us, the food of the soul; its air and light, its life-giving warmth, its cleansing from sin; the easy yoke of Christ, His light burden. Prayer is the constant feeling

[1] Ephesians v. 30.
[2] St. John xvi. 13. Compare xiv. 16.
[3] 1 Timothy iii. 15.
[4] From Philaret's Catechism.

(the recognition) of our infirmity or spiritual poverty, the sanctification of the soul, the foretaste of future blessedness, angelic bliss, the heavenly rain, refreshing, watering, and fertilising the ground of the soul, the power and strength of the soul and body, the purifying and freshening of the mental air, the enlightenment of the countenance, the joy of the spirit, the golden link, uniting the creature to the Creator, courage and valour in all the afflictions and temptations of life, the lamp of life, success in all undertakings, dignity equal with the angels, the strengthening of faith, hope and love. Prayer is intercourse with the holy angels and saints, who pleased God since the beginning of the world. Prayer is the amendment of life, the mother of heartfelt contrition and tears; a powerful motive for works of mercy; security of life; the destruction of the fear of death; the disdain of earthly treasures; the desire for heavenly blessings; the expectation of the universal Judge, of the common resurrection and of the life of the world to come; a strenuous effort to save ourselves from eternal torments; unceasing seeking for mercy (forgiveness) of the Sovereign; walking before God; the blissful vanishing of self before the all-creating and all-filling Creator; the living water of the soul. Prayer is holding all men in our hearts through love; the descent of heaven into the soul; the abiding of the Most-holy Trinity in the soul, in accordance with that which has been said: "We will come unto him and make Our abode with him." [1]

As your thought is near to you, as your faith is near to you, so near is God to you, and the more lively and steadfast is your thought about God, the more lively your faith, and the recognition of your infirmity and nothingness, and the feeling of your need of God, the nearer will God be to you. Or, as air is near to your body, so near is God to you. For God is, so to say, the mental air, by means of which breathe all the angels, the souls of the saints and of living men, especially of pious ones. You cannot live for a single moment without God, and you actually live each moment in Him: "For in Him we live, and move and have our being." [2]

Your doubt in the presence of God in any place, and at any time, and the trouble of the soul arising from it, prove that we cannot be in any place without God, and that we live every moment and in every place by Him alone; doubt only confirms in a negative manner the truth of God's omnipresence, and the impossibility for us, as well as for any creature, to be anywhere without Him. And, indeed, wherever you are, if you doubt in the presence of God, and feel straitness and fire in your heart,

[1] St. John xiv. 23. [2] Acts xvii. 28.

do not succumb to doubt; consider it as an enticement, an illusion of the Devil, and you will immediately feel at rest. We must always remember that God, like our soul, is a spiritual Being, and that, by our thoughts and hearts, we either draw near to God, and become one spirit with Him, or withdraw ourselves from Him, and become one spirit with the Devil and his assisting power.

Let every Christian understand the devilish flattery that lies in everything worldly and perishable, and turns us away, under various plausible pretexts, from loving our neighbour as ourselves.

Icons are a requirement of our nature. Can our nature do without an image? Can we recall to mind an absent person without representing or imagining him to ourselves? Has not God Himself given us the capacity of representation and imagination? Icons are the Church's answer to a crying necessity of our nature.

You who pray! let the name of the Lord, or that of the Mother of God, or that of an angel, or of a saint, be unto you in the place of the Lord Himself, the Mother of God Herself, of the angel or saint himself; let the nearness of your word to your heart be the pledge and testimony of the nearness to your heart of the Lord Himself, of the Most Pure Virgin, of the angel or saint. The name of the Lord is the Lord Himself; the Spirit is everywhere present, and filleth all things; the name of the Mother of God is the Mother of God Herself; and the name of an angel is an angel, or the name of a saint a saint. How can this be? Do you not understand? It is thus:—Suppose, for instance, that your name is John Ilitch. If you are called by these names, then you would acknowledge yourself wholly in them, and would answer to them, meaning that you agree, that your name is you, yourself, together with your soul and body;—it is likewise with the saints: when you call upon their names, you call upon them themselves. But, you would say, they have no body. What does that signify? The body is only the material covering of the soul, its house,—whilst the man himself, the essence of the man, is his soul. When people call you by your name, it is not your body that replies, but your soul, by means of a bodily organ. And thus the name of God and that of a saint are—God Himself and His saint. But as God is the Most-incomplex and omnipresent Spirit, and all the saints rest in God, therefore our intercourse with all the saints by the prayer of faith is a very easy matter—easier than intercourse with the persons who live with us, as, to communicate with men, we are

sometimes in want of a corresponding language, or we hesitate how to express ourselves, lest we should be blamed for our speech; whilst there even the simple, artless voice of a believing, loving heart is heard, there even the language of the dumb is understood, there the soul and its conditions and desires are seen even without words.

Icons in churches and houses are necessary, amongst other reasons, because they remind us of the immortality of the saints; "that they live unto Him,"[1] as the Lord said that in God they see, hear, and help us.

What is the name of our God? Love, Mercy, Compassion, Bountifulness. When you pray, contemplate with the eyes of your heart Love and Mercy standing before you,—the Lover of men listening to you.

When you pray to the heavenly Powers, do not represent them to yourself as very terrible, inaccessible, or unmerciful: no, they are the gentlest, humblest, most loving, accessible, friendly beings, ever ready to hear, and very near to those who call upon them in prayer with faith and love. Their attribute is love of union with all Christians, through the prayer of faith. Also, when you pray to the heavenly Powers, despise everything earthly as perishable, and love with all your heart the heavenly, spiritual life, and aspire to it. It is most pleasing to them to see our sincere love of wisdom, our desire to become their fellow-citizens, which we are indeed called to be by the grace of Jesus Christ and the Most-Divine Trinity.

Shall I forget Thee, Lord, the invisible, incomprehensible Lord, ever filling my heart with life, light, peace, joy, power, and endurance, Thou Who art every good in my life, and Who alone constitutest my life! O! do not let me forget Thee!

Lord! Thy name is Love: do not cast me away, erring as I am! Thy name is Power: strengthen me, who so often grow weak and fall! Thy name is Light: enlighten my soul, darkened by earthly passions! Thy name is Peace: appease my troubled soul! Thy name is Mercy: do not cease to forgive me!

I sometimes pray in church for God's people thus: Here, Lord, many of these who are standing in Thy temple, stand before Thee with their souls idle, like empty vessels, and "know not what to pray for as they ought;" fill Thou their hearts now at this favourable time for them, in this day of salvation,

[1] St. Luke xx. 38.

by the grace of Thine All-holy Spirit, and give them to me at my prayer, to my love, filled with the knowledge of Thy goodness, and with heartfelt contrition and devotion, as full vessels; give to them Thy Holy Ghost, that "Maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."[1] I myself, their pastor, am sinful and impure above all men, but do not consider my sins, Lord, despise them according to Thy great mercy, and hear my prayer at this hour, for the sake of the grace of the priesthood resting on me and dwelling in me. Grant, Lord, that this grace may not be idle in me, but that it may ever burn in me with faith, hope, love, and son-like boldness in prayer for Thy people!

Lord, accept my tearful prayer for my spiritual children, and for all orthodox Christians who seek to please Thee, and receive it as my care for their salvation, as my pastoral care! Be to them Thyself, in accordance with my prayer, both the voice and the trumpet, awakening them from their sinful sleep, the eye watching over their hearts, the hand guiding them on their journey to the heavenly country, and raising up those who fall through incredulity, faint-heartedness, and despondency; be to them the motherly love—in which I myself am so deficient—tenderly caring for their true welfare; "be all things to all, that some may be saved."[2] For Thou art, in truth, the one Pastor, invisibly and secretly pasturing the souls of men. Thou art the one, true, and most wise Teacher, speaking in the very hearts of Thy people. Thou art the one true Lover of Thy creatures and children by grace; Thou art an abyss of wisdom and omnipotence; Thou alone art ever-vigilant and unwearying, and teachest us Thy ways, even during our sleep. Be then Thyself, Lord, instead of me, the Pastor and Teacher of Thy sheep, which Thou hast intrusted to me; lead them Thyself to grassy pasture lands; guard them Thyself from spiritual and carnal wolves; guide Thou their feet into the way of truth, righteousness, and peace. Be unto them instead of me, light, eyes, mouth, hands, and wisdom; but, above all, be unto them the love in which I, a sinner, am so wanting!

God is an abyss of all blessings, of omniscience, great wisdom, omnipotence, grace, mercy, righteousness, and unchangeableness in good, but "He that is joined unto the Lord," through the prayer of faith and the works of love, "is one spirit"[3] with the Lord, and therefore he is filled, according to the measure of his faith and love, with wisdom and spiritual power; he receives from Him, as from the true Goodness, everything leading to salvation, and himself becomes merciful and compassionate

[1] Romans viii. 26. [2] 1 Corinthians ix. 22. [3] 1 Corinthians vi. 17.

to others, and is filled with spiritual wisdom, firmness, and the unchangeableness in faith and virtue. Thus, as God is the ever-flowing Source, we have only to be united to Him by lively faith and love unfeigned in order to be filled by Him with every spiritual blessing. Such union is possible always, and in every place, if only our hearts are ever with Him, and not with the Devil and the vanity of this world. This is why amongst righteous men we often find seers and prophets working miracles of Divine omnipotence, love and mercy, steadfast, unchangeable in virtue unto the laying down of their lives for the faith, out of love to God, and filled with the spiritual wisdom of the saints, "for the Lord their God is holy."[1]

If your heart and thoughts are in accordance with the Œcumenical creed, and with God's commandments, you will then unfailingly have close union and affinity with God, because God is a spiritual, thinking, personal Being; but if your heart and thoughts consciously differ in any respect with the universal belief and commandments of God, or the words of the Gospel, then your union with God is broken, and your heart enters into a destructive alliance with the enemy of truth and life, the Devil. As the air of a room that has no communication with the outer air becomes exhausted and filled with a multitude of foreign germs injurious to health, and loses its vital qualities, so, likewise, the soul, by withdrawing itself from God, through any intentional doubt, unbelief, and iniquity, loses its vital quality, and only lives a physical, lower order of life. As in order to refresh the air, in order to fill it with vital germs, it is necessary to introduce outer air into the room, so, likewise, into the soul—this kind of air contained within our body—it is necessary to introduce, by means of faith and love, the life-giving breathing or blowing of the Divine Spirit; and then it will each time become quickened, and will receive fresh powers for faith and love. "Every soul is quickened by the Holy Ghost,"[2] sings the Holy Church. For what is man but a vessel filled with the breathing of God—or with a soul, after the image and likeness of God? It is therefore necessary to change the air contained in this vessel, the more so because it is vitiated in us even from nature from the very first causes of sin, and becomes further corrupted by our passions and lusts, and is often contaminated by the poisonous breathing of the Devil.

As the air of a room is identical with the outer air, and proceeds from it, as it necessarily supposes the existence of the outer air, diffused everywhere, so likewise, our soul—the breathing of God—supposes the existence of the everywhere-present and

[1] Psalm xcix. 9. [2] From the Antiphon at Matins.

all-filling Spirit of God. Such is the parallel between the material and spiritual chambers.

Know, once for all, that in the Church, in all her services, sacraments and prayers, breathes the spirit of holiness, the spirit of peace, the spirit of life and salvation; and that all these properties belong to the Holy Ghost alone. Holy thoughts, or words of life and truth, can be easily distinguished from thoughts and words of falsehood and death; the latter are anguish, disturbance, spiritual death. "For to be carnally-minded is death; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace."[1]

As God is a thinking Being, it is extremely easy to lose Him from the heart; and it is equally easy to regain Him in the heart by means of steadfast repentance.

It is a wonderful thing! When the heart is united, by means of lively faith, with the origin of life, the Holy Ghost, then it is calm, it expands, and thought is free and bright, the tongue likewise is free and fluent; but as soon as a man mentally grudges his brother anything material, such as food or money, when he remembers any brother who seeks and needs food, then his heart is immediately struck with spiritual apoplexy, it becomes bound, oppressed; the mind also becomes bound in consequence of the affection of the heart—the source of thought—and is darkened; the tongue also; the circulation of the blood increases and flows to the head, and the whole man falls into a troublous, abnormal state. Thus our neglect of our brother's spiritual condition is deservedly punished; thus our attachment to material things is deservedly punished! Glory to Thy righteousness, O Lord!

The Almighty power of God, existing and acting throughout the world, is concentrated similarly as the beams of the sun are concentrated in a focus or glass—in the holy icons. The concentration of the power of God is particularly present in the reasonable image of the Divinity, man, especially in his heart, filled with faith, hope, and love, as in a focus; in the heart is reflected, by Its light, the Sun of righteousness, the Holy Trinity, our God, with the abundance of His gifts, warming and enlightening each one's soul according to the measure of each one's faith.

You may sometimes have seen how the human face is reflected in a broken mirror in a multitude of separate images, according to the number of pieces in which the mirror was broken, or in

[1] Romans viii. 6.

every bubble of water, or in every drop of dew, and in the pupil of the human eye. If this is possible and is a common phenomenon in nature, then why should not we Christians allow numerous representations of one and the same face—say of the Lord, or of His most pure Mother, or of a saint, and see in each image the Lord Himself, or His most pure Mother, or the saint, as we see in a mirror or in pictures numerous reflections of one and the same face, and reverence them with all the respect due to them? Does not Nature herself teach us, in some degree, to imitate from her that which serves to our piety?

During our prayer to God, to the most pure Mother of God, to the Angels and Saints, we suppose them to be standing before us and listening to us, as is usually the case during the conversation of two or several persons standing face to face to each other. And it is so in reality. The Lord's countenance is ever before us, likewise Our Lady, with the Angels and Saints, are, in the Lord God, always face to face with us if only our hearts are turned to them. Our Lady, all the Angels and Saints, are as though in one house, one family—Our Lady as the Mother of all—the holy Angels and Saints as our elder and younger brethren. As in the family of a good father, all the children are ever with him, all love one another and care for each other; so also the Angels and Saints of the Heavenly Father are ever before His face, love one another and care for each other, the strong for the weak, the perfect for the imperfect.

If you pray to the Lord, or to Our Lady, or to the Angels and Saints from your whole heart, then you speak to the very heart of the Lord, of Our Lady, of the Angel or Saint, for we are all in the one heart of God, in the Holy Ghost, and all the Saints are in the heart of God—"Dwelleth in Me and I in Him."[1]

When praying, believe firmly that the Lord is present in every word of the prayer, and that He is the fulfilment of whatever you ask, of every one of your petitions, both for yourself and for everybody else.

The enemy daily and violently persecutes my faith, hope and love. Thou art persecuted, my faith! Thou art persecuted, my hope! Thou art persecuted, my love! Endure, faith; endure, hope; endure, love! Take courage, faith; take courage, hope; take courage, love! God is your Defender! Do not grow weak, faith; do not grow weak, hope; do not grow weak, love!

[1] St. John vi. 56.

Reverence in every way images of living men, in order that you may duly reverence the image of God. For the image of the Lord Jesus Christ is the human image. He who does not respect the human image will not respect the image of God!

Am I not everything to you—I am the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—your God, your life, your peace, your joy, and your blessedness? Your riches, your meat, and drink, your raiment, your all? To what, then, do you cling? Is it not to dust? What is that you grudge Me in the person of your neighbour? Is it not dust? Do you grudge it to Me, Who has created all things, Who can turn earth and stones into bread, and can bring forth water from a rock? Be always with Me and in Me, and you shall be always at peace and joyful. Has your trust in Me ever been in vain? Have I not always given you tranquillity and new life?

If you share your prosperity with your neighbour, if you have it in common with him, then all God's blessings will be in common with you. "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine.[1]"

When you forbid the Devil in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, then His name, the sweetest to us, and the most terrible and grievous to the demons, itself creates power, like a two-edged sword. Equally, if you ask anything of the Heavenly Father, or do anything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, then the heavenly Father, for the sake of the name of His beloved Son, shall give you all things in the Holy Ghost, in the sacraments, if you fulfil His commandments, and will in no wise consider your unworthiness; for wherever the name of God is made use of with faith, there it creates powers: for the very name of God is power.

Some persons ask: What is the use of mentioning the names of the departed or living in prayer for them? God, being omniscient Himself, knows their names and the needs of each one. But those who speak thus forget, or do not know, the importance of prayer, do not know the importance of every word said from the whole heart; they forget that the justice and mercy of God are moved by our heartfelt prayer, which the Lord, in His goodness, imputes to the merit of the living or the departed themselves, as to the members of the one body of the Church. They do not know that also the "Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven,"[2] in her love,

[1] St. John xv. 17; xvii. 10. [2] Hebrews xii. 23.

continually prays to God for us, and expressly mentions before God the names of those who pray for them—equal for equal. We make mention of their names, and they of ours. Whilst he who does not lovingly remember his brethren in prayer, will not himself be remembered, and does not deserve to be mentioned. Even one word of faith and love means much in prayer. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."[1]

When we pray for the living and for the departed, and mention them by name, we must pronounce these names lovingly, and from the whole heart, as though we carried in our souls the persons whose names we mention, "even as a nurse cherisheth her children,"[2] "remembering that they are our members, and members of the Lord's body."[3] It is not right to stand before God and merely run over their names with the tongue without the heart's participation and love. We must remember that God sees into the heart; that the persons for whom we pray also require from us brotherly love and sympathy as a Christian duty. There is a great difference between the apathetic repetition of names and their hearty remembrance: the one is as far from the other as heaven from earth. But, above all, the name of the Lord Himself, that of His most pure Mother, and those of the holy angels and saints, must always be pronounced from a pure heart with burning faith and love; in general, the words of the prayer must not be merely run over with the tongue as if we were turning over the leaves of a book or counting money, the water must flow like a stream of living water from its source—they should be the sincere voice of the heart, not a strange, borrowed garment.

Have the same attention and respect for the Word as you have for the living man, and firmly believe that "the word of God is quick and powerful" as a living being, as an angel, and that, by reason of its spiritual fineness, it is "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."[4] The word of God is God Himself; and therefore when you speak, believe that you have to do with living, and not with dead beings, with active, and not with inert and powerless ones. Know that you should pronounce every word with faith and assurance. The words are living pearls. "Neither cast ye your pearls before swine."[5]

During prayer, it is necessary, in the first place, that the

[1] James v. 16. [2] 1 Thessalonians ii. 7. [3] Ephesians iv. 25; v. 30.
[4] Hebrews iv. 12. [5] St. Matthew vii. 6.

object of the prayer should be definitely expressed, or at least, that there should be a clear sense of it and desire for it in the heart; in the second place, it is necessary that this desire should be expressed with feeling and lively trust in the mercy of the Lord or in that of the Mother of God; in the third place, there must be a firm intention not to sin in future, and to fulfil God's will in everything. "Thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."[1]

When you pray for anything, either to the Lord or to the most pure Mother of God, or to the angels and saints, asking their intercession before God for yourself or for others, then consider the words, expressing your petitions, your needs, as the very things, the very matter, for which you ask the Lord, and believe that you have already a sure pledge of receiving the objects of your prayer, in the very words by which these objects are designated. For instance: when you pray for health for yourself or for someone else, look upon the word health as the very thing itself, as the very deed; believe that you already have it by the mercy and omnipotence of God, for the word itself, the name, may in an instant become deed with the Lord, and you will unfailingly receive that which you ask for in return for your unshaken faith. "Ask, and it shall be given you."[2] "What things soever you desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them; and ye shall have them."[3]

Do not pay attention to the darkness, fire, and distress proceeding from the enemy during prayer, and steadfastly trust with all your heart in the very words of the prayer, being assured that the treasures of the Holy Ghost are concealed in them — that is, truth, light, life-giving fire, forgiveness of sins, expansion, peace and joy of the heart, and blessedness.

The great names: the Most Holy Trinity, or the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, called upon with lively, hearty faith and reverence, or thought of in the soul, are God Himself, and bring into our soul God Himself in Three Persons. But of God, "and through Him, and to Him, are all things"[4]: therefore, if you are united to God the Trinity by lively faith and virtue, especially by meekness, humility, and mercy, ask of Him whatever you desire, whatever the Holy Ghost teaches you to ask, and it shall be given unto you, either quickly, in a moment, in an hour, or after some time, according to the judgment of God's great wisdom. "Desire of Me, and I shall

[1] St. John v. 14.
[2] St. Matthew vii. 7.
[3] St. Mark xi. 24.
[4] Romans xi. 36.

give thee."[1] Everything that you ask for is certainly less, infinitely less, than the Giver Himself, as it derives its existence from Him. And, as the Giver Himself is an infinite, incomplex Being, and can in some manner be comprised in one single thought of ours, in one single word, then believe that one single word of yours, one single petition concerning the fulfilment of anything, can at a sign from the Lord immediately become a thing or a deed. "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."[2] Remember the wonders that Moses worked, remember how that man of God was a god to Pharaoh, and how instantaneously at his word, or at a movement of his hand, or of his staff, everything either changed or appeared. O great God, most glorified God, God of wonders, God of unspeakable mercy, bountifulness, and love to man, glory to Thee always, both now and for ever, and unto ages of ages! Amen.

Spiritual pride manifests itself by the fact that a proud man dares to make himself a judge of religion and of the Church, and says: "I do not believe in this, and I do not acknowledge this; this I find superfluous, that unnecessary, and this strange or absurd." Spiritual pride also manifests itself in boastfulness, in the proud man's pretended knowledge of everything, whilst in reality he knows very little or his spiritual eyes are entirely blind. "That is not worth reading," he says; "it is all well known; these sermons are not worth reading; they contain the one same thing which I already know." Human pride also manifests itself to a great extent when an ordinary mortal dares to compare himself with God's saints, and does not see their great and wonderful perfections acquired by their own exploits, with the assistance of the grace of God; perfections which God Himself has crowned and glorified in them. Such a man says: "Why should I reverence them, and especially why should I pray to them; they are men like me; I pray to God alone?" And he does not consider that God Himself commanded us to ask the prayers of the righteous for ourselves. "For him will I accept."[3]

Spiritual pride also manifests itself by insensibility to our sins, by the Pharisee's self-justification and self-praise, by insensibility to God's mercies, by ingratitude to God for all that is good, by not feeling the need of praising God's greatness. All those who do not pray to the Almighty God, "to the God of all spirits and of all flesh,"[4] to their Life, do not pray by the reason of their secret pride.

[1] Psalm ii. 8. [2] Psalm xxxiii. 9. [3] Job xlii. 8.
[4] Prayer from the Office for the Burial of the Dead.

If, when praying to the Mother of God you do not find due reverence for Her in your heart, and feel evil and blasphemous thoughts, then say the following words of praise worthily applied to Her: "Thou, our Lady, art all light, all holiness, all mercy, all wisdom; Thou, as the Mother of the Almighty, canst do all things; Thou art ever one and the same, all-perfect as the Mother of the all-perfect King of Glory!"

Unbelief betrays itself by the fact that it has nothing in common with truth; an unbelieving heart is restless, anxious, weak, inconsistent, whilst a believing one is, on the contrary, tranquil, blissful, great, and firm.

When you pray to the Lord, or to our Lady, or to the angels and saints, do not ascribe any difficulty to the Lord, to our Lady, to the angels and saints, in fulfilling your petitions, or the petitions of other believers, but believe that it is as easy and simple for the Lord to give any blessing to His people, and equally so by the prayers of His most pure Mother and of the angels and saints as it is for you to think of it. Besides this, as God is ever-flowing, infinite goodness, he desires and ever seeks to impart His goodness to His creatures, if only they turn to Him with faith, hope, and love, like children to their father, recognising their sinfulness, poverty, need, blindness, and infirmity without Him.

When you pray to the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost—to the one God in the Trinity—do not seek Him outside yourself, but contemplate Him within, as dwelling in you, entirely penetrating and knowing you. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"[1] "And I will walk among you, and will be your God."[2] "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and will be a Father unto you."[3] "O Lord, Thou hast searched me out and known me,"[4] says David.

When during prayer you doubt in the possibility of the fulfilment of any of your petitions, then remember that to God it is "possible" to give you "all things," excepting direct evil, which is only proper to the Devil—that the word itself, or your petition itself concerning anything, is already a sure guarantee on your part that its fulfilment is possible: for if you can only think of something, either possible or impossible to yourself, then this "something" is absolutely possible to the Lord, to Whom the thought is already deed, if He pleases to fulfil it;

[1] 1 Corinthians iii. 16.
[2] Leviticus xxvi. 12.
[3] 2 Corinthians vi. 16, 18.
[4] Psalm cxxxix. 1.

even for yourself the blessing already exists in the word, and only does not exist in the deed; but in order to fulfil a petition, God has the Son, the Creator, and the Holy Ghost the Accomplisher. To the possibility of accomplishing all things, add His infinite mercy, by which He is the ever-flowing source of being, as well as of all the gifts of being; He is the God of gifts, the God of mercy and bounties. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."[1] Add to this God's great wisdom, by which, in bestowing gifts upon us, He chooses that which is best for us, and which corresponds to our spiritual and bodily state. On your part is required only firm, undoubting assurance in the possibility of the Lord's fulfilment of your petition, and also that your prayer should absolutely be good, for good, and not for anything evil. "Your Father, which is in heaven," it is said, "shall give good things to them that ask Him."[2]

When praying to God, we must have such firm, unshaken faith that doubt in anything would be difficult and even impossible, and therefore we must have inscribed in our hearts the words: "With God all things are possible";[3] we must also have the lively assurance that God fulfils everything; that His Being is love and mercy; that His business and, as though, His nature is to create, to give, to forgive, to be bountiful, to fulfil our requests. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive."[4] Also, we must carefully watch our heart, that it should not lie, that every word should come out of its depths: "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord!"[5] that is, we must be most careful of the truth of the prayer, of that sincerity, which makes all the words of the prayer composed by others our own words, and which esteems every word as true.

Be zealous after love: all things shall pass away, but love shall eternally remain, as God Himself, who is Love.

Life is a great experimental science. Nothing is more difficult than to pass through this science, this narrow way, and these narrow gates. And those who have not learned, either through their mother's teaching or at school, to have faith in God and the fear of God, and to lead a pious life—those will find it especially difficult to study in the school of life. Often he who was found clever and learned in the school of sciences, who was greatly esteemed for his abilities, shows himself to be ignorant in the school of life; and, not only this, sometimes useless for any-

[1] St. Matthew vii. 7. [2] St. Matthew vii. 11. [3] St. Mark x. 27.
[4] St. Matthew xxi. 22; St. Mark xi. 24. [5] Psalm cxxx. 1.

thing, either for family life, either by reason of his intractable character or his ungovernable heart, or for social activity. He is in distress, and not unfrequently suffers shipwreck in life, like a vessel loaded with a heavy cargo, and allowed to put to sea during a storm without rudder, sails, and rigging.

Remember, being endowed with speech, that everything was created by the Word and exists by Him, and have undoubting faith that creation or change through the word of your mouth, by the power of God, is the most ordinary matter; have, therefore, the highest respect for the word, and do not use it in vain, above all do not use it as an instrument of falsehood—the Lord will condemn those who speak falsely. O my God, the world of spirits and the material world are created and exist by the Word of God, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is an incomplex Being, a Spirit, a Oneness, worshipped in the Holy Trinity.

When asking various blessings of God, believe that God is all to all; if you ask health of Him, believe that He is your health; if you ask faith, that He is your faith; if you ask love, that He is your love; if you ask peace and joy, that He is your peace and joy; if you ask for help against visible and invisible enemies, that He is your all-powerful help; whatever blessing you would ask of Him, believe that He is this very blessing, as well as every blessing, and if He finds that this blessing will be profitable to you, He will be this blessing for you. "God shall be all in all."[1]

The word in the mouths of some is spirit and life, whilst in the mouths of others it is a dead letter (for instance, during prayer and preaching). "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."[2] Such should actually be our words too, for we are images of God the Word.

As the body breathes by means of air, so the soul breathes by means of God's mercies. If a father and mother look upon it as an ordinary, natural, and necessary matter, to daily give their children bread or fish—this our most common food—and do not give them a stone instead of bread, or a serpent instead of fish, though they are evil by nature—then, how much more, how infinitely more bountiful is our Heavenly Father, Who is true Goodness—how much more shall "He give good things to them that ask Him"?[3] As there is a most abundant quantity of waters upon the earth, all come and freely draw of them and drink of them, so the Lord is

[1] 1 Corinthians xv. 28. [2] St. John vi. 63. [3] St. Matthew vii. 11.

like a deep spiritual ocean of living waters: let each one come and draw the spiritual blessings by means of true, firm, and unashamed faith. Only stretch out this spiritual vessel and you shall unfailingly and abundantly receive of the Water of Life, the forgiveness of sins, and peace of conscience. But fear doubt, it will deprive you of the means of obtaining every mercy of God.

If you have not firm, unashamed faith in the most Merciful and Almighty God, do not hasten to pray to Him to grant you any blessing, otherwise the Devil will strike and wound you with incredulity or unbelief in the possibility of the fulfilment of your prayer, and you will go away from before the face of God ashamed, despondent, and gloomy. Do not be heedless, but first sit down, count in accordance with the Lord's words your spiritual estate, or measure your faith, "whether you have sufficient to finish it," lest the demons, seeing your want of calculation, begin to mock at you, saying: "This man began to build and was not able to finish."[1] Thus, before prayer, reckon the degree of your faith, and, having found it sufficient, lively, firm, and unashamed, "come boldly unto the throne of grace that you may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."[2]

As in the material world God benefits us through the sun lighting and warming us and the earth with all its fulness, through air, water, plants, and animals; so also, in the spiritual world, the Lord directly benefits us, enlightening our minds and hearts, interceding for us, saving, forgiving, and protecting us by His grace (here also through His ministers); He benefits us still more through the medium of His servants the angels, called ministering spirits, through the medium of His saints, and especially through the medium of the most exalted of all creatures, His most pure Mother, through the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, hierarchs, martyrs, venerable and righteous men, and all the saints. These holy beings are the servants of God for our salvation. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"[3] They are the resplendent mental rays of the Eternal Sun of righteousness, God. How then shall we not call upon them to help and intercede for us, these blessed beings who have received from the Lord Himself grace, to serve for our salvation? How shall we not render them due reverence and gratitude? Would it be in conformity with the laws of even human social life and propriety?

[1] St. Luke xiv. 28-30. [2] Hebrews iv. 16. [3] Hebrews i. 14.

Lutherans say: "Why should we ask the prayers of the saints for ourselves? We pray to God Himself." But they contradict themselves, for why do they ask a pastor to pray for them? They might as well pray without a pastor if everyone has an equal access to God and we have no need of any sanctified suppliants. What blindness! They say that by praying to the saints we worship idols. This is untrue. We do not pray to any saint as we pray to God, we only ask his prayers for ourselves. Is there a shadow of idolatry in this? In the same manner as we ask God's living ministers and suppliants to pray to Him for us, so likewise we ask the heavenly suppliants, who, from their love to God, have great boldness before Him; besides this, very many of them, even when they lived here on earth, were already suppliants and intercessors before God for the world; there, in heaven, this activity of theirs is only continued, has attained greater dimensions, and is especially powerful, because it is no longer hindered by the heavy and inert flesh. All the saints, though they have finished their earthly course, yet live: "For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him."[1]

"Hail, Thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with Thee!"[2] Thus does the holy Church invoke the most holy Virgin, the Mother of God. But the Lord is also with every pious soul that believes in Him. The Lord's abiding with the Virgin Mary before she conceived the Saviour is not a particularity proper to the most pure Virgin alone. The Lord is with every believing soul: "The Lord is with thee." These words may be said to everyone who keeps the Lord's commandments. And the Lord is near unto all, only men themselves are far from Him by their hearts, by their thoughts, their intentions, and the inclinations of their hearts, as well as by their words and deeds, which are contrary to the law of God. "Lo, I am with you alway," says our Lord, Who was born of the most holy Virgin, "even unto the end of the world"; [3] that is, with every one of us, at every time, throughout all generations, all ages, upon the whole space of the earth, unto the end of the world.

I am in God, with God, before God, under God. He is my life. For my bodily life He has diffused air and water; He provides food; while for my soul He Himself "is everywhere present and filleth all things"; He Himself is air, and meat, and drink. I continually stand, and walk, and sit, and sleep, and eat, and wherever I may be I am always and in every place

[1] St. Luke xx. 38. [2] St. Luke i. 28. [3] St. Matthew xxviii. 20.

in God. The first is an image of the second. In order to breathe it is necessary to keep the mouth and nostrils open; for the life of the spirit prayer is necessary. In order that the prayer should be sincere, should wholly embrace the soul and be concentrated, it is necessary to watch the heart, to gather together or fix the mind and heart upon God alone; to entirely renounce every falsehood, double-mindedness, and all earthly attachments.

The greatest continual error of our heart against which we ought unceasingly to struggle during our whole lifetime—at night, in the morning, and during the day—is the secret thought that we can be anywhere and at any time without God and outside Him even for a single moment. We must unceasingly strengthen our heart in God, from Whom it continually mentally turns away; and great progress in the Christian life would be attained by him who could sincerely exclaim with Hannah, the mother of Samuel, "My heart is strengthened [rejoiceth] in the Lord; mine horn is exalted in the Lord; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in Thy salvation."[1]

It is necessary to remember that God is the living God, giving life to all; that the Mother of the Lord also lives; that the angels and saints likewise live, and that they hear us in God.

"Praying in the Holy Ghost."[2] The Holy Ghost is air to the soul, and Christ is life-giving food. They are inseparable, the Spirit and the Son. As air and food are equally necessary and inseparable from each other, so likewise the Holy Ghost and the Son are inseparable in Themselves and in Their actions in us; whilst God the Father acts primarily and beneficently through the Son and the Holy Ghost, as their Origin and Cause.

Those who touched the Saviour's garment were made whole. Why is it that those who employ holy water with faith are even now healed? Because the Cross, immersed in water, with the prayer of faith, is as though the life-giving Lord Himself. As the Saviour's garments were penetrated with His life, so also the water, in which the life-giving Cross is immersed, is itself penetrated with life, and thus becomes healing.

Nothing is nearer to us than God. He is the God of hearts, of the very hearts, and the heart, in its turn, is nearer than anything to us. It is the whole man, "the hidden man of the heart,"[3] as the Apostle says.

[1] 1 Samuel ii. 1 (according to Russian version "strengthened" or "stablished")
[2] Jude i. 20. [3] 1 Peter iii. 4.

I was on my way to matins. The sun was in the east, and was reflected in a lantern hanging on a post. The reflection was so full and bright that it was impossible to look at it, as it is impossible to look at the sun itself. I thought to myself, "If the material-created sun is reflected with such a fulness of radiance in the transparent glass, then is not the mental, uncreated Sun, God, reflected in the human heart pure from sin (proceeding from its dark origin)? Is He not resplendently reflected in His saints, who, for the sake of union with Him, out of love for Him, cleansed themselves, or cleanse themselves, here 'from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God'?"[1] Yes, He is resplendently reflected in the souls of His chosen ones, and these pure souls, these images of God, like the transparent glass, shine forth like gold in the sun, like diamonds of the purest water, but they shine for God and the angels, not revealing their brightness to men, although at times, by God's ordering, they do shine even for them, by the light of their faith, their virtues, when necessary, similar to a *candle* put on a *candlestick* in a room, and lighting the room with all those who are in it.[2] Also, if the created sun is reflected in the glass of a lantern, then is not the uncreated mental Sun wholly and essentially reflected in His most pure Flesh and Blood on the altar of the Lord by the action of the life-giving Holy Ghost? Yes, It is reflected with all Its light and all Its love, so that "he that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him."[3] The body and blood are most wholly Christ Himself.

In prayer there are petitions in opposition to our proud flesh, which ascribes everything to itself; thanksgiving in opposition to the insensibility of our flesh to God's innumerable benefits; praise in opposition to the carnal man, seeking praise for himself alone.

Prayer is the proof of my reasonable personality, of my likeness to God, the pledge of my future godliness and blessedness. I was created from nothing, I am nothing before God, as having nothing of my own; but, by the mercy of God, I am a being endued with reason, with a heart, with free will, and by my reason and freedom I can, by turning with my heart to Him, continually increase in myself His infinite kingdom, increase more and more His gifts in me, draw from Him, as from an ever-flowing, inexhaustible source, every blessing, both spiritual and material, especially spiritual ones. Prayer instils in me that I am the image of God, that by the humble and thankful disposition of my soul before God, and by my free will, I infinitely increase in

[1] 2 Corinthians vii. 1. [2] St. Matthew v. 15. [3] St. John vi. 56.

myself the spiritual gifts of God, that I can thus infinitely improve myself and can increase to infinity my likeness to God, my heavenly blessedness to which I am predestined. O! prayer is the sign of the great dignity with which the Creator has honoured me. But at the same time it reminds me of my nothingness (I am of nothing, and have nothing of my own; therefore, I ask God for everything) and of my most high dignity (I am an image of God; I am made godly; I may be called the friend of God, like Abraham, the father of believers, if only I believe undoubtingly in the existence, mercy, and omnipotence of my God, and strive to become like unto Him during this life by works of love and mercy).

Constant fervent prayer brings us the most sincere and firm conviction of the immortality of our soul, and of the bliss of the future immaterial world; for we derive all the delights of prayer from the God the Spirit. We borrow all the power of prayer from Him, and also by His grace from the Mother of God (it is She who saves our souls from misfortunes, who gives us peace, joy, and new life), and from the angels and saints.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"[1] "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."[2] Brethren, be attentive to and reverence the Holy Ghost, ever dwelling in you, and remember that the mystery and wonder of your resurrection from the dead shall be accomplished by the same Spirit who now dwelleth in you by the grace and gift of Christ, through baptism by water and the Spirit, through repentance, and especially through the communion of His life-giving Mysteries.

God is Truth, and my prayer should be truth as well as life; God is Light, and my prayer should be offered in the light of the mind and the heart; God is Fire, and my prayer as well as life should be ardent; God is perfectly free, and my prayer should be the free outpouring of the heart. What riches there are in the human spirit! I have only to think of God, only to desire a hearty union with God, and He is immediately with me; neither the walls of a house, nor the bars of a prison, nor mountains, nor gulfs shall hinder this union. God is immediately with me, likewise the angels and saints; with God they are all before my eyes, close to my heart, as the nearest of friends, as those who are akin to me. O the riches of the human spirit!

[1] 1 Corinthians iii. 16. [2] Romans viii. 11.

The Spirit is so simple that it passes through every spiritual and material being; through all reasonable beings and through all creatures not endued with reason, through the heavenly bodies, the earth and all its organic and inorganic bodies, and is not in the least limited by them, being always higher than them and quickening them as the Spirit of God, or it easily passes through every kind of matter without quickening it, such as mountains, stones, walls of buildings, as if there was no matter whatever there. God is such, as though there were no other spiritual or material being at all; and therefore I can always truly say that I am always with God, or as though there were only God and myself. "Thou art with me,"[1] says the psalmsinger. "I am with thee,"[2] says the Lord to the Apostle Paul.

When praying fervently, either standing or sitting, or lying down or walking, and being sometimes suddenly visited by the Spirit of God and hearing His voice, we notice that He penetrates into the soul, not through the mouth, not through the nose, neither through the ears (although the Saviour bestowed the Spirit through the word and breathing, and although "faith cometh by hearing"[3]), but straight through the body into the heart, in the same manner as the Lord passed through the walls of the house when He came to the Apostles after the Resurrection, and acts suddenly, like electricity, and more rapidly than any electric current; then we feel unusually light, because we are suddenly freed from our burden of sins, the spirit of contrition for sins, the spirit of devotion, peace, and joy visits us. Remember how the angel appeared in the shut-up prison in order to deliver the Apostle Peter; the doors were shut, the keepers standing before the doors, but the angel suddenly came upon him, and at the same moment a light shined in the prison.[4] Thus the Spirit of God suddenly visits the chamber of our soul, the body, and the light shines in it.

How do the saints hear us? They hear us as being one in the Holy Ghost with us—"that they also may be one in us,"[5] as members of the one Church of God, having for her head the one Christ, and animated by the one Spirit of God. The saints see and hear us in the Holy Ghost in the same manner as we see and hear with our bodily eyes and ears by means of light and air; but our bodily sight and hearing are very imperfect in comparison to spiritual sight and hearing. At a great distance we cannot see many objects and cannot hear many sounds, but spiritual sight and hearing are perfect; not a single movement of the heart, not a single thought, not a single word, intention, or desire

[1] Psalm xxiii. 4. [2] Acts xviii. 10. [3] Romans x. 17.
[4] Acts xii. 7. [5] St. John xvii. 21.

escapes them, because the Spirit of God—in Whom the saints dwell, see, and hear us—is all-perfect, omniscient, all-seeing, and all-hearing, for He is omnipresent.

The power of prayer is sufficient, for instance, to open and shut heaven, to turn fire into dew. Whose prayer is specially powerful? The prayer of the Mother of God ("by Thy holy and all-powerful supplications") and that of the saints in heaven; on earth the prayers of God's priests, as of those placed by God Himself at His very throne, to pray for themselves and for His people, "for Himself and for the errors of the people";[1] and the prayers of venerable men, of hermits, "for him will I accept."[2] Christians are slothful in prayer, from this arise want of faith, hope, and love, sins and iniquities, spiritual and bodily misfortunes.

Priest of God! believe with your whole heart, believe always in the grace given to you from God, to pray for God's people. Let not this gift of God be in vain in you, for by it you can save many souls. The Lord speedily hears your heartfelt prayer for His people, and is easily inclined to have mercy upon them, as He had at Moses', Aaron's, Samuel's, and the Apostles' prayers. Avail yourself of every opportunity for prayer—in church, when you celebrate Divine service or a sacrament, in private houses, at the ministering of the sacraments, during prayers and thanksgivings; everywhere and at all times think of the salvation of God's people, and you shall also obtain great grace of God for yourself.

Be always as convinced that you live every moment by the life-giving Trinity as that you are lighted by the material light, are fed by meat and drink, and breathe by means of air—by these three things united in one for you.

The substance of the world is as nothing;[3] everywhere and in all things is the life-giving Spirit of God higher than anything. When you pray to God, represent to yourself that matter is as though non-existent, and that all creatures are as though non-existent; but that God alone is omnipresent and one, having no determined place and limits, and filling, embracing, creating, and keeping all things. If you yourself are free from attachments to material things, and give yourself to prayer and fasting, then even in you the spirit will as though swallow up the flesh, and you will become spiritual and will contemplate God the Spirit everywhere in nature; whilst, on the contrary, those who are attached to earthly things, especially to food and drink, to

[1] Hebrews ix. 7. [2] Job xlii. 8. [3] Psalm xxxix. 6.

money, become "sensual, having not the Spirit."[1] And in everything they only see the flesh, not contemplating the spirit, and even rejecting the spiritual side of things.

Where there is the constructing material, there the Constructor must absolutely be supposed, because matter, not having in itself either sense or power, cannot organise itself, cannot grow and bring forth fruits: it is evident that at every moment it must be governed by an infinite Mind, by an All-powerful Hand.

As the material sun is reflected with its whole circle and with all its radiance in the innumerable transparent objects upon earth, so likewise the spiritual Sun, God, is pleased to reflect Himself in innumerable beings, both in heaven and upon earth—there in the angels, here in men; and as the light even of the material sun is not restricted by dense though transparent bodies, but, passing through them unimpeded, shines even in the rooms of a house closed upon all sides to the outside air, or in transparent objects turned towards it, so likewise the spiritual light is not restricted for spiritual beings by any material obstacles, neither by the walls of a house, nor by the dark walls and vaults of prisons, nor by huge mountains, in the caverns of which the servants of God were concealed, nor in the abysses of the earth. He penetrates everything, and shines forth everywhere in every soul capable of receiving the light of the heavenly truth into itself. "Paul and Silas prayed in their prison and sang praises unto God, and the Lord heard their prayer."[2]

When we pray, then the ears of the Lord are inclined to our prayer. He is then, as in general He always is, as near to us as the icon, before which we stand, and even much nearer: He is close to our very heart. His presence near us is as manifest as the visible icon, and therefore the icon is only a visible representation of how near the Lord is to us, how He looks upon us and hears us. And God's saints, in the Holy Ghost, are also as near to us as the Holy Ghost is near to us, Who is everywhere present and filleth all things, "Whose temple we are,"[3] and in the Holy Ghost they see and hear us in the same way as we see and hear people speaking to us. For the Holy Ghost is the medium, by which we see and hear even ordinary things.

You have seen that on the icons of the saints, the Lord Jesus Christ is represented above, with the imperial globe in one hand

[1] Jude i. 19. [2] Acts xvi. 25, 26.
[3] Hebrews iii. 6; 1 Corinthians iii. 16; vi. 19.

and with the other extended in blessing. This is taken from reality. From heaven the Lord ever watches over those who combat for His sake upon earth, He helps them actively, as the almighty King, in their struggle with the enemies of salvation, blesses His wrestlers with "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,"[1] and bestows the crown of life upon them after they have finished their earthly exploits. Thus, Christians, all of you strengthen yourselves in faith and hope, looking unto Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith,"[2] Who ever watches over you and sees all your acts from the heavenly heights, as He looked down upon the proto-martyr, Stephen, opening unto him heaven and His glory; as He looked upon Saul, afterwards Paul, and also revealed Himself to him in the heavens, enlightening him with His light, and calling him with His voice.[3]

The object of our life is union with God: in this life by faith, hope and love, and in the future one by all-perfect love. But see how the enemy and we ourselves here distort this object. We unite ourselves in our hearts with various things, in accordance with the diversity of our passionate attachments. Sometimes, O horror! our love is fixed upon silver, upon food, drink, dress, dwelling, furniture, upon men like unto ourselves, until we forget God. Sometimes we are proud, we envy, hate, lie, and then we unite ourselves directly with the Devil himself, who is malice, falsehood, pride, envy personified—and how we thus insult our Master, Who created us after His image and likeness; how we distort this divinely drawn image, drawn from God Himself! But we think of this too little, are too ignorant of that which is the most essential matter to us—our union with God.

He who knows the constancy and malice of the bodiless spirits against himself, will not greatly despond, although they may use every means to plunge his heart into despondency, he will not grow irritated at everything, knowing that they (the enemies) strive in every way to incite us to irritation, to make us malicious, envious, to attach us to money and material gain. But there is one condition necessary for this, we must watch over ourselves, for the enemy not unfrequently disguises himself under the form of our self-love and ambition, and, as though he defends our welfare, whilst in reality he is absolutely destroying us. Christian hope! how many are deprived of thee through the snares of invincible enemies! How many fall into despair and take away their own lives! Think of those who of their own free will have laid hands on themselves by hanging,

[1] Romans xiv. 17. [2] Hebrews xii. 2. [3] Acts vii. 55, 56; ix. 3, 4.

by drowning themselves, or in other ways; also drunkards and others.

The Lord spoke the word of promise, and His word shall be fulfilled. He speaks, and shall it not be? The Lord points to the laws of nature, to their constancy and firmness, as a proof of the faithfulness of His promises.

You have felt in your heart during prayer, or during the reading of the Word of God and other holy books (and sometimes even during the reading of worldly ones of well-intentioned contents, in which, for instance, some event representing the action of God's Providence upon men is described), or during edifying conversation, "a still small voice," as though a current of electricity was passing through your body. It is the Lord visiting you. "A still small voice"[1]—and the Lord is in it.

When you pray to Our Lady, or to any Saint, steadfastly represent to yourself that you are a member of the Church, in which Our Lady is—the chief stone of the edifice, "the First Origin of spiritual renovation,"[2] and know that you are closely, inwardly united with all the heavenly dwellers, as one of the stones of the edifice, though not a firm, strong one. Thus, by understanding yourself, you will understand why prayers so easily reach the Saints; for we are all under one Head—Christ,[3] and are all animated by the same Spirit of God.

The Lord is—the Cause and constant Support (power) of my organic bodily life, through the action of the lungs, the stomach, the heart, the veins and muscles; and of my spiritually organic life, through the mind and thought, through the enlightenment of my heart by His Light.

Wonderful is the power of faith! Only the lively thought of God—only heartfelt faith in Him—is required, and He is with me; only hearty repentance for sins, with faith in Him, is required, and—He is with me; one good thought, and—He is with me; a pious feeling, and—He is with me. But the Devil enters into me through impure, evil, blasphemous thoughts, through doubt, fear, pride, irritability, malice, avarice, envy; therefore his power over me entirely depends upon myself; if only I keep watch over myself, and continually preserve in my mind the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, with faith and love, he will be powerless to do me any harm.

[1] 1 Kings xix. 12.

[2] Acathistos to the Most Holy Mother of God.

[3] Ephesians i. 22.

Strive to do everything in opposition to that which the bodiless enemy wishes you to do. He incites you to pride, to self-glorification, and to judging your brother — you must humble yourself to the ground and ashes, judge yourself as severely as possible, and praise your brother in your heart. Should your brother, through the action of the enemy, behave proudly and maliciously to you—you must behave humbly and lovingly to him. If the enemy incites you to avarice—be generous with goodwill. Act thus in all similar circumstances, and you will obtain great grace from God, and will see this yourself with your spiritual eyes. If you have not inward strength to do so, the enemy being, as you say, very powerful, then ask it in prayer, at every time and every hour, of the Almighty, and He will help you.

According to the measure of the "spirit and truth" with which you begin to pray before the holy icon, for instance, of the Saviour, in the same measure the Spirit of Him Who is represented upon the icon is attracted to the icon. So that if your faith, in the presence of the Person, represented upon the icon, attains such a height that you see that Person living before you, then by grace He is actually there. The wonder-working images which speak, from which flow tears, blood, etc., are examples of this, and this is why such images all look extraordinarily living and expressive. What can be impossible to God, Who is able to give life to stone and form man out of it? He can miraculously accomplish the same with a painted image. "All things are possible to him that believeth";[1] and the Highest miraculously comes down from heaven to him that believeth. He is similarly united with, and works miracles by, the sign of the life-giving cross.

What is man, if he is not the image of God, enshrined in earth, because the human body is nothing but—earth? Therefore do not wonder at God appearing in material images, and even speaking by the mouth of an image, for "with God all things are possible."[2] When it was required, He even spoke with a human voice by the mouth of an ass.[3]

So living and true, is sometimes said of a portrait, that only speech is wanting; if man is capable, by his art, of giving life to a canvas, or a board, or paper—then what can be impossible to God? Why cannot He breathe life into an image, and give it the capability of speaking, if it pleases Him? Only speech is wanting—you have done everything, artist, on your part;

[1] St. Mark ix. 23. [2] St. Mark x. 27. [3] Numbers xxii. 28.

now let the Lord complete your work, and He will make the image speak.

There is a spiritual world: there is a communion of souls with those at a distance, and with the departed; they see and hear us, and here is an evident proof of this: a woman, whose husband was ill and was lying in a room—at a distance of some four hundred miles from her, and who afterwards died—saw one evening the people who came to him, what he was doing, and heard the words that he spoke. Do not the Saints see us in the same manner? Do not they hear our prayers in the same manner?

In looking upon the faces of others, I see my own face, for we are all as one, created by God, from one single man, from the same blood, and all equally after the image of God—and therefore we must look upon all purely, unsuspiciously, not inimically, not cunningly, not avariciously, but with pure godly love. Also, when looking upon icons, upon the faces of the Saints, the image of the Mother of God, and that of the God-Man Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, I see myself in them, for they are also men, and through His incarnation and humanisation, Jesus Christ, our God, has wholly clothed Himself in me, having thus honoured mankind with an immeasurable honour, driving away the stench of sin from those who believe and are baptised in Him, and making them fragrant with the holiness of the Holy Ghost dwelling in them through faith, baptism, and the Communion of His Divine Body and Blood. Thus see yourself in others, that others may see themselves in you, love all as yourself; also see yourself and mankind in Christ, in His Most Pure Mother, and in the images of the Saints, and assimilate yourself to God and the saints by imitating their holiness—that they, too, may see themselves in you, in proportion as you become like unto God and them by virtue, and that they may recognise in you their member when you appear at the universal judgment, and may receive you into their midst as one of themselves.

I ought to rejoice in the fact that it very often happens to me to carry in my mind and heart, and to pronounce with my lips, the name of God, the name of Our Lady, the Mother of our God, those of the holy Angels and Saints, either of them, all by name during the year, or of the special ones daily mentioned in the church prayers, or in the office of the blessing of the water. For the name of God, as well as the name of the Mother of God, our all-powerful Mediatrix, remembered sincerely, from the whole heart, sanctifies, quickens, and comforts; and the Saints our intercessors before God, pray for us, when we

call upon them in prayer, and enlighten us by their manifold virtues. It is good to have union with God and the heavenly dwellers.

By means of prayer we obtain remission of our sins. "I forgive thee all that debt, because thou desiredst Me."[1] Experience proves the same.

"He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him."[2] This we feel, and experience confirms it. Most blessed, most full of life is the man who communicates of the Holy Mysteries with faith and heartfelt repentance for his sins. This we truly feel, and the contrast is also manifest. If we approach the Holy Cup without sincere repentance for sin, and with doubt, then Satan enters into us, and dwells in us, destroying our soul, and this, too, is most perceptible.

"All things are near to God," says the Russian proverb. Truly everything is near: all spiritual and sentient creatures, the Angels, the souls of the departed, all living men, all animals, all material worlds. The Spirit of God passes through all things, a reasoning, pure, most refined Spirit, dwelling in every believing, pious soul. "The wild beasts of the field are in My sight,"[3] says He. "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[4] As an infinite Spirit, to God nothing is far away, but all things are before Him, as upon the palm of the hand. He is wholly everywhere, and all things are in Him. All things live and exist by Him.

God and the created spirits, and the souls of the departed, as well as those of the living, are—thinking beings, and thought is rapid, and in some sort omnipresent. Think of them with your whole heart, and they will be present with you—God always and necessarily so, and others by the gift and power of God. "When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God."[5] Why? Because He is with you and in you.

When our heart is enveloped in the darkness of Satan, the darkness of the passions, then it denies God, although it ought, in that case, to deny its very light; it has become darkened, and therefore its spiritual eyes are closed and do not see God, but this does not mean that there is no God. "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God."[6] Truly a fool.

To the name of Jesus Christ, or to the sincere thought of Jesus Christ, is united great power, able to drive away the

[1] St. Matthew xviii. 32. [2] St. John vi. 56. [3] Psalm l. 11.
[4] St. Matthew xxviii. 20. [5] Psalm lxxvii. 3. [6] Psalm xiv. 1.

passions and give peace to the heart. The same may be applied to the name of the holy Angels and Saints, beginning with the Mother of God, down to the holy and righteous men and "Urodivoi"[1] for Christ's sake. Only call upon their names sincerely, and by the grace of God they, too, will help you.

The icons of the Saviour in every orthodox house show His omnipresence, His sovereignty in every place, whilst the images of the Saints—the presence with us or the nearness to us of the Saints, by the grace of God, as members of the one body of the Church, united under the one Head—Christ.

"As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us."[2] This is the reason why we must pray to the Saints: they are in God, and God is in them;[3] and this is why they hear us, that is, owing to their being in the omnipresent God. "For holy art Thou, O our God, and Thou restest in the Saints."[4]

For the sake of our faith alone, the spiritual mountains—that is, the heights and burdens of sins—are removed. This is why, when Christians release themselves from the burden of their sins by repentance and confession, they sometimes say, "Thank God, a mountain has fallen off my shoulders!"

During prayer a sincere seeking after amendment is indispensable.

As by means of the electric telegraph we speedily communicate with persons who are far away from us, so, likewise, by means of lively faith, as though through the telegraph wires, we speedily communicate with God, with the Angels and Saints. As we entirely trust to the speed of the electric current, and to its reaching its destination, so, likewise, we should completely trust to the speed of the prayer of faith and to its reaching its destination. Send your petition to God and the Saints by means of the telegraph of faith, and you will speedily obtain an answer.

[1] The "*Urodivoi*" were men and women whose religious enthusiasm reached such a height that they lived an entirely spiritual life and paid no heed to outward things: they left all for Christ's sake, endured the greatest privations, and sought humiliation and dishonour. The outward condition was so entirely lost sight of that they sometimes appeared rough, ignorant, and even foolish—"they were fools for Christ's sake"—but in reality these outward attributes only concealed the height of their religious enthusiasm, and therefore they constantly and deeply influenced those amongst whom they lived. The Orthodox Church honours some of the "*Urodivoi*" as saints. "*Urodivoi*" sometimes even now appear in Russia, and always exercise a great influence upon the people.—*Translator's Note.*

[2] St. John xvii. 21. [3] 1 St. John iii. 24. [4] Exclamation at Vespers.

The answering signs of a telegraph are simple, but the experienced read them; the actions upon the heart of the God of all spirits, of all flesh and of the Saints, are likewise simple, but the experienced understand them.

O wonderful proof of the omnipresence of God! For instance, your heart is wounded by an attachment, even a momentary one, to silver, let us suppose, and it begins to ache; but as soon as you say to God from your whole heart, "Thou art my only treasure, Thou art my silver and gold, and food and raiment," you will immediately feel relieved.

There are many people who pray in such a manner that they seem to worship God in vain. There are also some persons who pray, and they are so slothful and evil that when they feel an influx of impure and evil thoughts in their heart and head, they immediately leave off praying and flee from the church or from before the icon in their home.

If you wish to pray with a life-giving prayer, first of all strengthen your heart in the Lord. "My heart is strengthened (rejoiceth) in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord."[1]

From the time since the first man sinned, men became so darkened by sin in the very centre of their being (in their hearts), that they very often have not any consciousness and feeling of the omnipresence of God, and think that four walls and a ceiling can conceal them from Him, Who fills all things, Who sees even those who hide themselves in secret places. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth?"[2] "I was naked, and I hid myself."[3] But it did not avail!

My soul is in God, as a fish in water or a bird in the air, surrounded by Him upon all sides, at every time; it lives in Him, it moves in Him, it rests in Him, and finds freedom in Him.

My thought, either bright or dark; my conscience, either accusing or excusing;[4] my heart, either tranquil and joyful, or sorrowful and oppressed; the organisation of my body, the organisation of the worlds and of the earth, which we inhabit, with all that is in it and around it, incessantly testify to the continual presence in me, with me, and everywhere, of mine and your Creator. May the dark and foolish thought that I am

[1] 1 Samuel ii. 1.
[2] Jeremiah xxiii. 24.
[3] Genesis iii. 10.
[4] Romans ii. 15.

forsaken by my God, that He is not ever with me—ever flee far away from me!

May my soul always remember that God the Word, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, at every moment upholdeth all the worlds "by the word of His power;"[1] and amongst them my small world, too—the soul and body, and that He, at every moment, knows not only the number of the hairs of my head, but also the number and quality of my thoughts and the movements of my heart, for everything exists, and is accomplished before His clearest eyes.

May my soul understand that as everything proceeded from God and exists in God, therefore the Lord God in the most perfect manner knows at every moment of the existence and of the nature of every being, and that He supports its existence, at every moment, by the laws of nature given by Him. If we, ourselves, having written a book, know all about its disposition and contents, about all the ideas to be found in it, so that when other people explain us the idea, and especially the plan of our book, we say that it is our plan, our idea; then why should we take from the Lord His omniscience of all worlds, of all creatures, of all things contained in the world, with all their qualities and conditions? Are they not, so to say, the book of God? And thus, my soul, reverence thy Creator every moment of thy life, and know that at every moment He knows thee wholly, that He supports and gives thee life and everything necessary for thy existence and welfare. "How could anything have endured if it had not been Thy will?"[2]

Men are ashamed to acknowledge that they do not believe in their high calling and destiny, in the fact of their being the priceless image of God, most dear to God, for whom has been prepared and promised infinitely great bliss in heaven—in union with God.

As a poor man does not believe that he may in future become a rich and very distinguished person, so many Christians do not believe that they shall possess a wealth of future blessings, and shall freely be made to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."[3] We may well wonder how, without any special merits on our part, we can expect such high honour and glory, such riches. We are self-loving, covetous, avaricious, and therefore we are unable to understand how such infinite love, such a wise and disinterested Father can exist; it is as though we still cannot believe that "God so loved the world that He gave His only

[1] Hebrews i. 3. [2] Wisdom xi. 25. [3] Ephesians ii. 6.

begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." [1]

Men are perplexed, and, to tell the truth, many do not believe in the honour which is promised to the righteous in the future life, because Satan has lowered mankind in its own eyes. But this honour shall truly be, and we should hope to attain it; for man is the image of God, and it is for this that the Son of God was incarnate, in order to re-establish his image. This idea is developed in Holy Scripture.

If at any time you doubt in God, or in the dogma of the most Holy Trinity, remember the short doxology, "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, both now and ever, and to ages of ages," and think what little importance you yourself have in comparison with the men of all ages, of whom there were an infinite number of great and divinely bright intellects, and who all heartily, unanimously ascribed glory to the one God in three persons.

As our Creator and God is one, therefore He brings together and unites all things, and, for a believing soul, there is nothing far away that He cannot bring near by means of faith. Do you wish to converse with—not to speak of God, Who is everywhere, but with the high and heavenly powers, principalities, archangels and angels? You can do so. In accordance with your prayer they will instruct, enlighten, strengthen you in your faith. Or do you wish to converse with the departed Saints? You can do so. They will be with you at your first heartfelt call—especially the most Holy Virgin, Mother of God, our most speedy Mediatrix. "We unceasingly glorify Thee, O Christ, Who hast indescribably joined the earthly to the heavenly, and hast established one Church for the angels and men." [2] Christ is the head both of angels and men. With such a Head, what then cannot be near to us? And how near to us must the Head Himself be in order to hear us! Experience convinces us that He hears us, as the saints also hear us.

The Lord has full respect for nature, which He has created, and for her laws, as the production of His own infinite, most perfect wisdom; this is why He usually accomplishes His will through the medium of nature and her laws; for instance, when He punishes men or blesses them. Therefore, do not require miracles of Him without extreme necessity.

The Lord especially highly esteems the works of His hands, gifted with reason and free will, that is, the angels and saints, and

[1] St. John iii. 16.

[2] Canon to the Archangel.

works through them for our sanctification and salvation. Therefore do not say: I always have recourse straight to God alone with my needs, with my prayer. It is sometimes also necessary for you to have recourse to the saints as His instruments and organs. God Himself does not wish that these holy temples of His grace, of His Divine Spirit, should remain inactive in the work of our salvation.

Like young birds under the wing of the hen, so the whole universe, all the assemblies of angels, all men, all senseless animals, all material worlds, are under the Lord's wing. He enlightens all and everything—some with mental light, and others with material light. He warms all—some with spiritual warmth and others with material warmth; and as the hen hears the cries and the sighs of the young birds under it, so the Lord hears even our secret sighs, our prayers, our praises, and sees all our needs. "My trust shall be under the covering of Thy wings."

It is good for me to pray for men when I partake worthily, that is consciously, of the Holy Communion: then the Father and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, my God, is within me, and I feel great boldness before Him. Then the King is within me, as in His abode: I may ask what I will. "We will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him."[2] "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."[3]

During prayer it is necessary to have such faith, that there should not even for a single moment be any secret doubt, or any secret thought in the heart, that God does not hear us, and it is necessary, furthermore, that our soul should represent God before itself during the whole time of our prayer and converse with Him, as with a King.

If we sinners pray and make supplications to the Lord for ourselves and others; if, when living upon earth, the saints pray for others and ask God for what is needful for them, then much more will they do so when they are transplanted to eternity and are face to face with God. By virtue of the great mediatory sacrifice of the Son of God, the prayers of the saints, especially those of His most pure Mother, possess, by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the power of mediation. This is the Lord's recompense for the merits of the saints.

The foundation of prayer is the yearning of the image towards its prototype, as of like to like.

[1] A prayer at the evening service of the Russian Orthodox Church. Also Psalm lxi. 4.

[2] St. John xiv. 23. [3] St. John xv. 7.

During prayer, have the thought that you[1] are a steward of the most precious prayerful inheritance of the Church, that you are an impure, unworthy steward, and that your work consists in reverently opening your heart and watering it with these pure streams of the words of prayer, but not in reasoning about them at your own free will.

It is remarkable: to-day I felt a doubt—of course suggested by the evil one—on the subject of the turn of a phrase in a prayer, namely: "Thou, Who alone hast power to forgive sins by the prayers of Thy most holy Mother and of all the saints,"[2] and I was covered with shame in my reasoning: the enemy struck me, hindered me, disturbed me during public prayer. But in what respect was my thought false? I thought thus: how God has power to forgive sins by the prayers of His most pure Mother and those of the saints, and not independently of Himself? Of course He has the power without the prayers of others. He alone has the power, but in order to honour the exalted virtues of the saints, and especially those of His Mother, the saints, who are His friends, who pleased Him with all their might during their earthly life—He accepts their prayerful intercession for us, unworthy ones, for us who must often stop their mouths on account of our great and frequent transgressions. Remember Moses, who interceded for the Hebrew people and obtained life for them from God whom they had angered. Some may say that God might have spared His people even without Moses' prayers; but, then, God would have been, so to say, unjust in bestowing life upon those who were not worthy of life, after He Himself had decreed that they should die; but when Moses—a righteous, meek, and humble man—began to intercede for them, then the most just God was appeased at the sight of the righteous man, at his love for God and his people, and for the sake of Moses' merits, the Lord forgave the unworthy, that is, the unrighteous, for the sake of the righteous. So likewise now, at the prayers of His most pure Mother, He forgives us, who, of ourselves, through our great and frequent sins and iniquities, are unworthy of His mercy. "Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, yet my mind could not be toward this people,"[3] said the Lord to Jeremiah of the Jews. From this it is evident that the Lord accepts the intercession of the saints for the evil-doers when the sins of these last do not exceed the measure of God's forbearance.

The Lord knowing the infirmity of our nature, darkened and weighed down by sin, and rising with difficulty to God through

[1] Speaking of a priest.
[2] Prayer for a woman on the first day after childbirth.
[3] Jeremiah xv. 1.

faith, has pleased to condescend to us unto the likeness of our being, unto taking upon Himself the form of a servant[1] in human flesh; such is His love. But as it was impossible for Him to eternally remain in the human body on earth, whilst it was necessary in accordance with the plans of God's ordering to ascend up with it into heaven, therefore for the infirmity of all future generations of men and in remembrance of His eternal love for them, of His sufferings and death, He changes, by the Holy Ghost, ordinary bread into His own Body and ordinary wine into His own Blood, and by His Spirit dwells wholly in this bread and wine; so that under the form of bread and wine, Christ the Life-giver, the Lord Himself, is wholly there. O unspeakable love, truly divine! The Lord has wholly used His infinitely great wisdom, His infinite power, for our salvation! Our infirmity is thus made, not only to see the Lord by means of faith, but even to taste Him with our tongue, and especially with our heart and with our whole soul. Glory to the Lord for having so loved us!

God grant that even after death our brotherly union with our departed relatives, and those whom we knew in this life, may not be broken off, that our love may not be extinguished, but may burn with a bright flame, and that constant true remembrance of those at rest may ever remain with us until our death. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you."[2]

In receiving the Holy Sacrament be as undoubtingly sure that you communicate of the Body and Blood of Christ, as you are sure that every moment you breathe air. Say to yourself, "As surely as I constantly breathe the air, so surely do I now receive into myself, together with the air, my Lord Jesus Christ Himself, my breathing, my life, my joy, my salvation. He is my breath, before air, at every moment of my life; He is my word, before any other word; He is my thought, before any other thought; He is my light, before any other light; He is my meat and drink, before any other meat and drink; He is my raiment, before any other raiment; He is my fragrance, before any other fragrance; He is my sweetness, before any other sweetness; He is my father and mother, before any other father and mother; before the earth, He is the firmest ground, that nothing can ever shake and that bears me. As we, earthly creatures, forget that at all times we breathe, live, move, and exist in Him and have "hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns,"[3] for ourselves, He has opened unto us, in His Holy Mysteries, in His Blood, the

[1] Philippians ii. 7. [2] St. Mark iv. 24; St. Matthew vii. 2.
[3] Jeremiah ii. 13.

source of living water, flowing into life eternal, and gives Himself to us as food and drink, in order "that we might live through Him."[1]

As the evil spirits are always near to us, and act upon us very rapidly and easily, so near to us and even incomparably nearer are the Lord God, the Most-pure Mother of God, the holy angels, and God's saints, and they act upon us still more rapidly and easily; for the evil spirits can only act upon us by God's permission, whilst the Lord God acts independently with the most entire freedom, and as being "everywhere present and filling all things," the Most-pure Mother of God, the holy angels and saints act upon us, as being one with Him through His grace.

"Thou, O Lord . . . hast given an heritage unto those that fear Thy name."[2] God has given Himself as an heritage, a possession to those who fear Him. What a great gift!

Prayer is founded upon faith. I believe that there is a God, before whom I lay my prayer; that there is an Almighty, holding all creatures in the palm of His hand, and giving various kinds of voices to His creatures, for inward intercourse amongst themselves, but not needing any voice Himself. I trust that my prayer will reach Him, or, to speak more exactly, will go direct from my heart to His ears. Similarly, the correspondence of a son with his father or mother, or between brothers and sisters, or that of a father with his children, or between friends at a distance from each other, is also founded on faith. They are sure when writing letters that the persons to whom they write are alive; they trust that their written conversation will reach them, will produce certain impressions, ideas, and feelings, corresponding to those expressed in the letter, and that they will answer the letter in accordance with its contents. As in life we are guided in many things by faith and hope, so much more in relation to the spiritual world should we "walk by faith, not by sight."[3]

When in any place—either in a house, or on a vessel at sea, or under the open sky—you doubt in the presence of God, then present to your heart the following proofs of the sure presence of God in that place: God keeps all things in His power, amongst them myself, with my soul and body, and every hard substance, and every liquid and transparent substance; thus He also keeps the very air in which I stand and by which I breathe, keeps every particle of it, and therefore He is called the Upholder of all things, for He holds in the palm of His hand all creatures,

[1] 1 John iv. 9. [2] Psalm lxi. 5. [3] 2 Corinthians v. 7.

down to the very smallest. How then is it possible that He should not be anywhere, in any place? How is it possible that the "Truth of things," the Origin of their being, should not be anywhere? If you say these words to yourself inwardly, your heart struck by doubt shall immediately revive and be at rest, which also serves as the strongest proof of the omnipresence of God, especially in our souls. Glory to Thee, all-powerful King, for not having left me in the darkness of hell, but for continually sending me Thy light in my darkness! "Thou also shalt light my candle; the Lord my God shall make my darkness to be light."[1]

Whether you are praying or sitting, or walking or lying down, or thinking, or rejoicing or sorrowing, whether you are well or ill, at home or out, on land or at sea, be continually and fully assured that God sees you clearly, most clearly—in all perfection, with all your thoughts, desires, works; in every condition, at every moment of your existence. That He hears more perfectly than the finest hearing, all your inward movements, all your words, though He Himself has neither sight nor hearing, these separate and complex, and, therefore, imperfect organs of recognition (though they are perfect for us), being Himself all the sight in His Being, wherefore the Greeks called Him θεός, and all hearing, or, to speak more exactly, all light and vision.

Remember constantly that the light of your soul, of your thoughts, and of your heart, comes from Jesus Christ. He is the "Light of the eye" of our heart—not like the light that comes from the sun, that appears and disappears, and does not penetrate through an opaque substance, but leaves many things in darkness, and cannot enlighten one single soul in the darkness of sin, but He is the "true Light, which lighteth every man" (that is, the principal part of his being, the soul) "that cometh into the world."[2] Yes, the light of Christ enlightens all, even the heathens. "A light to lighten the Gentiles."[3] It shines even in the darkness of sin, but sinful human darkness, or, rather, the men living in the darkness of sin, do not understand It, "comprehend It not;"[4] they do not guess that the light which is in their souls is from Christ, and think that it is their own natural light; that they themselves, by means of their natural intellect, their own sagacity and judgment, have attained to a certain truth, have accomplished certain work; they do not think that it is only by "the light of Christ that they see every light,"[5] the light of every noble science, of every noble art, and of every thing.

[1] Psalm xviii. 28. [2] St. John i. 9. [3] St. Luke ii. 32.
[4] St. John i. 5. [5] Psalm xxxvi. 9.

We have within us a spiritual eye, with which we see a million times more than we are able to by means of our bodily sight, which is merely an instrument of our spiritual eye; a conductor through which the soul either thinks or recognises all things visible. What are the objects of contemplation for this spiritual eye? The phenomena of the spiritual world. Besides the visible world, there is God, an infinite Spirit, an infinite Mind, Who has created and creates all things in the material world, which is the realisation of His thoughts (ideas), and there is a spiritual world, angelic, innumerable, living in constant contemplation of the Godhead and of all the works of His omnipotence and great wisdom. Our spiritual eye relates above all to the Lord, and in this case its functions are called contemplation and meditation on God; this contemplation and meditation on God can extend unto infinity, as God Himself is infinite, and have the property of cleansing the soul from sin, of perfecting it, and bringing it nearer and nearer to God, the Source of our light, or of our thought and life. After this we contemplate the angelic orders according to the measure of God's revelation, and their spiritual, light-bearing nature, their spiritual goodness, their love for God, for each other, and for mankind, their guarding actions in relation to our earth, to its elements, to human communities, to holy and other places, and especially to every Christian. Besides this, the spiritual eye turns within to the man himself, and then its function is called self-examination, self-knowledge, self-introspection, spiritual watchfulness over our own thoughts and desires.

As the Spirit of God dwells in a multitude of Christians, and wholly in all, together with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and at the same time is wholly everywhere—in heaven and on earth—so likewise Jesus Christ is in every particle of His Body and Blood, wholly in all Christian churches, and at the same time He is wholly everywhere, in heaven and on earth; as God, He is omnipresent, and there is no place where He is not wholly present. I take one particle of the Eucharist, He is wholly there; I take another, He is wholly there; a third, and so on, but in all of them there is the one and same Christ.

The mental denial of any of the three unoriginate Lights is equally death to the soul; in this manner God truly shows us that each of the three Persons of the Godhead is our life. "the life and lives."[1] We easily recognise the enemy by the denial of the Persons of the Godhead, by the burning of his

[1] Canon of St. Andrew of Crete.

falsehood in our heart, by the darkness and oppression arising from this in our soul.

As by the light of the sun we see the air, earth, water, and everything found in them, so by the light of the mental sun in our heart we see the world of spirits, the angels and God's saints, the Mother of God, the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, hierarchs, venerable men, and all the saints. We see them with our spiritual sight (by faith) in the same manner as with our bodily eyesight we see the objects of the material world. Thus a simple, pure heart sees, for instance, the Mother of God with the inward eyes in the same manner as the natural sight sees Her image or any other visible object.

The sign of Lord's mercy or of that of His most pure Mother to us, after or during prayer, is peace of heart, especially after the action of some passion, whose property is the absence of spiritual peace. By this peace of heart and a kind of holy tenderness of heart we can also easily recognise that our prayer has been heard, and that the grace asked in it has been granted to us. The success of the prayer is also recognised by the spiritual power, which we inwardly obtain for the fulfilment of the duties of our calling, and by the inward light manifestly entering into our soul.

The whole world is but a cobweb in comparison to the Christian human soul; nothing in it is constant and sure; we cannot lean trustingly upon anything; everything breaks. We must not cleave to anything with our heart except to the one God, Who has spread out this cobweb, and who supports it and gives it life. To whatever you attach yourself, except of God, everything wounds and oppresses the heart, whilst entire attachment to Him alone is life-giving.

In what does the life of a Christian consist? In having nothing in the heart but Christ, or, if possessing earthly blessings, in not in the least attaching himself to them, but in clinging with the whole heart to Christ.

Though God knows all our needs, prayer is necessary for the cleansing and enlightenment of our soul. It is well to stand in the sunshine: it is warm and light; likewise, when standing in prayer before God, our spiritual Sun, we are warmed and enlightened.

It is necessary to wash ourselves from the dirt, and prayer

is washing ourselves from spiritual filth, that is from sins, especially tearful prayer.

You do not receive from God what you ask Him, because you do not put aside the abomination of idolatry: the service of your belly. You pray to the true God, but you serve the god belly. "No man can serve two masters."[1] Cease to serve the idol, the belly, and then trust to receive from God that which you ask Him. Else you pray to the true God and serve a false God. Ask Him if He can give you what you ask. Or you serve the demon of extortion, and therefore the true God, Whom you neglect and forsake, does not fulfil your prayers. Or else you serve the idol of pride and vanity, and this idol takes possession of your heart as other idols do, and therefore the Lord does not listen to the prayers of an idolatrous heart. "They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns";[2] well, then, drink out of these cisterns—dead, dark water. "Dark water and thick cloud."[3]

Instead of the tree of life, there is the Bread of Life; instead of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, there is the same life-giving Bread of Life. Then it was said: "Neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."[4] Now it is said: "If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever."[5] Then Eve and Adam believed the deceiver, and died. Now, on the contrary, we believe in the words of the Lord: "This is My Body . . . this is My Blood,"[6] and receive new life. We rise by the same means through which we fell; we fell through unbelief in God, through disobedience, we rise through the obedience of faith. Then we were in league with the Devil against God, and in union with him, the lier to our destruction. Now we are joined with our whole heart to the Truth Itself—to God the Saviour, uniting ourselves to Him with our truthful heart, for our life, peace, and joy. "O fearful mystery! O loving-kindness of God! How is that I, being but dust, partake of the Divine Body and Blood, and am made incorruptible!"[7]

You imagine that you pray, but you have long ago left off praying. What you call prayer are only vain sounds, without meaning to your heart. You say the words, but your heart does not feel them; you are deceiving God and yourself. When you pray, you must unfailingly watch over your heart

[1] St. Matthew vi. 24. [2] Jeremiah ii. 13. [3] Psalm xviii. 11.
[4] Genesis iii. 3. [5] St. John vi. 51-58.
[6] St. Matthew xxvi. 26, 28; St. Mark xiv. 22, 24.
[7] Canon before Holy Communion.

and attend to the words of the prayers, you must feel their truth and power.

Now we stand up and fall (in faith and virtue), but we hope for a time and condition when we shall no longer be able to fall, when we shall reach such a state of perfect safety from falling, as the angels have attained to, who are now inaccessible to evil, and when we shall become strengthened in holiness. In the meantime fight against sin, and hope that the time will at last come of perfect victory over sin and over death, which is its offspring. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."[1]

"Now even a just man falleth seven times,"[2] and, falling, sighs and says: "O wretched man than I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? With the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin;" but the time shall come "when the law of sin, which is in our members shall be destroyed,"[3] and the law of God alone shall dwell in our hearts.

Now we seek lasting bliss, and do not find it; the pleasures which we invent are not lasting, they are false, vain, and of short duration; but if the Christian walks worthy of his vocation,[4] then he shall obtain as an inheritance a bliss which is true and lasting, and which shall completely satisfy the requirements of his soul.

When we hear anything bad said of anyone, then, inwardly comparing him with ourselves, we say in our heart: "I am not such; I am perfection in comparison to him," and thinking thus of ourselves and inwardly judging others, we are delighted at our superiority over others. This is the pride of Satan; this is the stench of the carnal, sinful man. May such thoughts flee from the soul! Let us consider ourselves as the worst of all men! Let us sigh when we hear anything bad said of anyone, and say to ourselves: "We are worse, a hundred times more sinful, than this man," and let us pray from our whole soul for the convicted brother.

What an honour it is to my nature that in the small chamber constituting my dwelling-place, or in my heart, I am able to converse with Him Who upholds heaven and earth in His right hand, Whom the powers of heaven serve in fear, with Him Who is infinite love!

[1] 1 Corinthians xv. 26.
[2] Proverbs xxiv. 16.
[3] Romans vi. 6; vii. 23-25.
[4] Ephesians iv. 1.

Owing to our corporality, the Lord, so to say, binds His presence and Himself to materiality, to some visible sign—for instance, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist He Himself wholly takes up His abode in the Body and Blood; in that of penitence, He acts through the visible person of the priest; in that of baptism, through water; in that of chrism, through the anointing with chrism; in that of orders, through the bishop; in matrimony, through the priest and the crowns He Himself crowns the bride and bridegroom; in the sacrament of unction with oil, through the oil; He unites His presence to the temple, to the icons, to the cross, to the sign of the cross, to His name, consisting of separate sounds, to the holy water, to the consecrated bread, wheat, and wine; but the time will come when His Body and Blood, as well as all other visible signs, shall be no longer required for us, for we shall then "more truly communicate of Him on the nightless day of His kingdom,"[1] whilst now only through material things—that is, through images and signs.

If I pray to God with hearty, lively, and perfect faith, then I am not only near Him, as a son living in the same house is to his father, but I am also near to all the heavenly powers, to all the saints, reigning in heaven; and they are no farther away from me than the icons before which I pray. Therefore it is an excellent custom with us to have in our houses icons of the Lord, of His most pure Mother, of the archangels, guardian angels, and of the saints, and to pray before them: their nearness to our bodily sight betokens their still greater nearness to our spiritual sight, armed with undoubting faith. Nearness: "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,"[2] just as in the parental house brothers rejoice when one of them, who had offended against his father, repents of the offence he has caused his father by his behaviour.

It is proper to the one eternal Almighty God, Who has life in Himself, not to have hope, but for us, the creatures of a day, who have received life, and all the gifts pertaining to life, from God—for us, the guilty creatures before the Author of our life, who have not fulfilled and do not keep the commandments of life—for us, the creatures who have rebelled against our Creator and Lord, only hope is left for our lot, and this only by the mercy of the Lord Himself, Who has devised hope as a means of restoring life to us, who have fallen from life eternal into eternal death. We all know that we carry spiritual death in our hearts, which gradually prepares our bodily death. Meanwhile our hearts, which were created for the life eternal, though they have tasted death, but not being completely struck by it,

[1] From the Easter Canon. [2] St. Luke xv. 7, 10.

yearn after life and bliss. It is this lost bliss that has been restored to us by the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and that is ready to be opened unto those who believe in Him even at the last time. This hope that we shall obtain, in Christ's name, the promised bliss, is the Christian hope. During the whole continuation of our earthly life, for the sake of His Son, Who was incarnate for us and took upon Himself all the sins of the world, God cares for our salvation, leads us to it, as though by the hand, by means of His Holy Spirit, who is the pledge of our inheritance of future blessings, through the Divine services, through sermons, through the Word of God and the sacraments, through our conscience, and through trying our inward parts; and finally He will lead us to the inheritance of the promised blessings.

To trust in God means to confide to Him our life, our fate, all our future, and to wait with confidence for the fulfilment of His promises. Hope proceeds from faith, as the plant from the seed, or the stream from the source. We believe that the Lord is good and merciful, that He loves us as a Father, and therefore that He desires every good and true happiness for us. He is most wise and omniscient, and consequently He knows better than we ourselves what is really needful and useful for us. He is almighty; and thus He is always able to bestow upon us that which He pleases, to fulfil that which He has promised. He is holy and righteous, and therefore all His words are truth. His promises are unchangeable. The highest proof of God's love to man is shown in the fact that He did not spare His Only begotten Son, but delivered Him for our sakes unto sufferings and death. Having strengthened our soul by the thought of the boundless mercy, wisdom, omnipotence, and holiness of our Creator and Provider, we can pass through the course of our earthly life without fear and without disturbance, like a child in its mother's arms, like a ship with trusty anchors. And therefore "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is."[1] "The Lord is my deliverer, in Whom I will trust."[2] "I will not be afraid for ten thousand of the people."[3] However, while having trust, we must not ourselves be careless and idle. The essence of Christian hope is a lively, active, and constant aspiration after the Highest Blessing and the Source of all blessings, God, with an insatiable longing to come near or to Him and to receive from Him and in Him the kingdom of heaven, prepared before the creation of the world. "Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the

[1] Jeremiah xvii. 7; Psalm ii. 12; Proverbs xvi. 20.
[2] Psalm xviii. 1.
[3] Psalm iii. 6.

living God. When shall I come to appear before the presence of God?"[1]

We are invited to join the company of the cherubim, seraphim, thrones, dominations, angels, and archangels—to take the places of the proud, fallen spirits. These grew proud and said within themselves to God: How wilt Thou repair our loss, which is unbearable, and felt by Thee, as the Most Wise, Who dost not suffer any want nor any discordance in Thy world? And the Lord, in answer to this, and to the humiliation of the Devil, was pleased to create man out of the earth, and to fill the loss in the angelic world, occasioned by the fall of the proud spirits, by earthly beings; and this infinite shame forms the infinitely great punishment of the proud spirits, and therefore they make use of all their infernal powers for the destruction of man. In order to show His great love, and for the greater shame of the Devil, the Lord took upon Himself the earthly body of man, in order to rescue him from the power of the Devil.

When you are very young, or leading the life of the sinful world, then you only know by name both Christ the Saviour, and the enemy of God and mankind, the most evil Satan, and you think that Christ is very far away from you in heaven, and that there is a Devil somewhere, but not in any way near and around you, and though you hear that he is evil, you think his wickedness does not concern you; but when you grow older and enter upon the devout life, when you serve God with a pure conscience, then you will experience in your heart the difference between the easy yoke of the Saviour and the heavy burden of Satan, who pitilessly injures us.

The Devil takes an enormous part in the sins of men: this is why, in the prayers before confession, sinners are indulgently judged for their sins before the Lord as "tempted of the Devil." Therefore, let no one consider himself cast away, even if he is a great sinner: your sins are greatly the fault of the Devil. Remember immediately Jesus Christ, and turn to Him for forgiveness of your sins; He is "the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world"[2]; He is the Lamb of God in order to take upon Himself and cleanse us of our sins.

Between God and myself, between my neighbour and myself, there often stands a dark, evil power. I know this by experience, surely, logically.

[1] Psalm xlii. 2, 3. [2] St. John i. 29.

By very small means the Devil attains important results. Christian! strengthen yourself, and believe in Christ with your whole heart; you will be the sure prey of the Devil if you are heedless and slothful. The Devil employs every means to prevent your believing heartily in Christ. And woe unto you if you lose faith!

Endeavour to attain to a child-like simplicity in your relations to men and in your prayer to God. Simplicity is man's highest good and dignity. God Himself is perfectly simple, for He perfectly spiritual and perfectly good. And do not let your soul be divided between good and evil.

The love of our Divine Saviour, Jesus Christ, of God the Father, and of the Holy Ghost to us is so great, so immeasurable, that, in comparison to it all human dislike, enmity and hatred against us become insignificant, and seem to vanish entirely. It is because of this boundlessness of God's love to us and the insignificance of human enmity that the Saviour commanded us all to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use and persecute us.[1] We are in the love of God; does it greatly matter to us if men are not well disposed towards us? What can they do against us when God has so loved us?

In the temple of God the simple, believing souls are as in the house of the Heavenly Father: they feel so free, so happy and light. Here true Christians have a foretaste of the future kingdom, prepared for them from the foundation of the world,[2] of future freedom from every sin and from death, of future peace and blessedness. When do they especially have a foretaste of this? When they turn sincerely with all their soul to God, praying fervently to God, taking the firm resolution to devote their lives to God, and when doing deeds of virtue outside the temple.

Christian hope is our hope for life in the Christ. We were created for life, but have fallen away from life into spiritual and bodily death, and, but for Christ, we should have been lost for ever, though we could not in any case have been altogether destroyed. God is true to Himself. Having created Godlike, eternal spirits, He is true to His eternity in them, and to destroy them altogether would be to renounce His eternity; whilst, on the other hand, He cannot receive fallen, sinful, uncleansed beings into union with Himself, otherwise He would have been obliged to disown His holiness and His immutability

[1] St. Matthew v. 44. [2] St. Matthew xxv. 34.

Therefore, may the firm love of God the Father unto us be for ever glorified; for the redemption and cleansing of us sinners, He did not spare His Only begotten Son, Who gave Himself up to death for us, not only that He might sanctify and cleanse us from every impurity, but also that He might present us to Himself a glorious Church "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."[1] "Because I live ye shall live also."[2] This is in Whom and upon what all our hope is founded. Because I live, says the Lord, ye shall live also, that is, shall pass from death unto life. The whole Gospel confirms our hope in life. (The resurrection of Lazarus, the conversation with Martha and Mary, the words of the Saviour on the occasion of the institution of the Eucharist, in the Gospel of St. John.)

Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and came forth from the tomb, through the closed doors, and without injuring its seal. Likewise He was born of the most pure Virgin, "leaving the portals of Her virginity unbroken by His birth."[3] Thus also He enters into the souls of believers, through their bodies, passing through them invisibly, always freely. Thus also He enters into the houses of all, and no walls or locks can restrain Him Who is infinite and unlimited.

In the future life our bliss will be increased by wonder—to suddenly see the saints and beautiful angels of the Lord, their numberless myriads, their symmetrical ranks, their hierarchical order by the wonder of seeing all the saints, all the good and simple men of God of all ages: the prophets, apostles, and all others, and above all by the contemplation of God Himself in inaccessible light; by our own inward enlightenment and most perfect beatitude, undarkened by any sin, fear, care, or sorrow.

Christian hope is our hope of union with God in the future life. Even in our present Christian state everything corresponds and is directed towards such union, both material and spiritual blessings: the grace of God in the Church, the Divine service, the sacraments, our conscience, our inward trial and cleansing by God, prayers, the fruits of prayers, the afflictions that cleanse our hearts, and the sicknesses. "Let him take up his cross."[4] Our present union in fervent prayer and in the sacrament of the Holy Communion prepares us for future heavenly union; the gift of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of Christians assures them of this. Owing to the same reason, every other union of the

[1] Ephesians v. 27. [2] St. John xiv. 19. [3] From the Easter Canon.
[4] St. Matthew xvi. 24; St. Mark viii. 34.

heart, except union with God and for His sake, is strictly forbidden us. Therefore we must "abstain from fleshly lusts"[1] and every sin.

By reverencing the angels, we ally ourselves with the life-giving conviction that there exists another world of reasonable beings, perfectly pure, simple, and bodiless, and that therefore the existence of our soul after death is not only possible, but real and actual. And by reverencing the saints, we again accustom ourselves to the thought that there is life for us after death, that virtue and holiness are rewarded after death, and therefore, if we live virtuously, we too shall be rewarded; that evil is punished, as we see in the Gospel story of the rich man and Lazarus, and that therefore we too shall be punished for the evil which we do here. In general the veneration of the angels and saints does not show any polytheism, but is entirely in accordance with our nature, and tends to actual spiritual profit.

In the matter of God's providence for men, and in accordance with the requirements of reason, there must be mediators between men and God from the spiritual world (as men occupy the medium between the spiritual and material worlds), who may guide us to the heavenly kingdom—namely, the angels. There is an astonishing gradation and order with the Lord in all His works. Everywhere in His kingdom the lower are guided by the higher; hence the necessity of guardian-angels for Christians redeemed by the blood of the Lord. Besides this, the angels themselves are full of love for us, and rejoice over the conversion of one sinner; but love is active, and the Lord has given perfect freedom to their noble and useful activity, as we see from the Holy Scripture. Guardian-angels are indispensable for men, owing to the craftiness of the evil spirits. Men themselves do not see them, for men are very infirm in the spiritual life. Therefore, besides the grace of God, we require a person, or persons, full of this grace, wise, firm by their nature: and such are the angels. Besides this, after man departs this life, there must be witnesses of his deeds against the demons.

From our own experience of lively, heart-felt prayer, we may know that the saints are received into the closest union with God. Also, by our own experience we know that during our communion with God, by means of the prayer of faith, our mind is enlightened in an extraordinary manner, and acquires the widest scale of action. At this time it sees that which it does not see in its ordinary state. From this, it follows that the saints, being in union with God, being also pure, detached from

[1] 1 Peter ii. 11.

the body, have the most clear, far-seeing mind. They hear our fervent prayers; and if these prayers are pleasing to God and profitable to us, they will unfailingly fulfil them.

The presence of a guardian-angel near every true Christian is indispensable, because the bodies of Christians, according to the witness of the Word of God, are temples of the Holy Ghost, and Christians themselves are members of the Body of Christ, sanctified by His sufferings on the cross and His death, and sealed by His sacraments, in which the grace of the Holy Ghost is communicated to them; especially so because they partake of the very Blood and Body of Christ in the sacrament of Holy Communion. The dignity of the Christian man, as a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Ghost, absolutely requires the presence near him of a guardian-angel, like an elder brother and friend, who guides him to the common Master in the kingdom of light and bliss. If there is "joy in heaven in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,"[1] we may judge by this what a powerful part the angels of the Lord take in our salvation.

Remember that during prayer the Lord perfectly corresponds to us, as our personal Prototype, and answers to each of our words, to every movement of our heart.

By reverencing icons—firstly, I reverence in them God, Who has begotten before all worlds the Son, His living Image, Who gave material being to the infinite thought of God the Father, by creating the worlds and all creatures that were in the thought of God, and man, created after the image and likeness of God; secondly, I honour in them the image of God incarnate; thirdly, I honour in them myself, my own image of the immortal god-like man, called to be a partaker of the Divine nature, to union with the Lord, to be the temple of the Holy Ghost. Also, I am involuntarily incited to venerate icons because I see manifested in them the power of God, saving the faithful and punishing unbelievers, in the same way as I see and feel this same power in the sign of the Lord's cross, which is called life-giving by reason of its miraculous power. For all these reasons, icons replace for me the persons themselves whose names they bear. The images of the saints upon our icons represent to us the nearness in the spirit of God's saints, who all live in God and are always near to us in the Holy Ghost, through our hearty faith and prayer to them. For what can be far away for the Spirit of God, Who is everywhere present and filleth all things, "going through all understanding [gifted with understanding] pure and most subtil

[1] St. Luke xv. 7, 10.

spirits?"[1] "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."[2] This means that the disposition of our souls lies open, not only to God, but also to the angels. "Standing before Thee and before Thy terrible and holy angels, I bring before Thee my evil and wicked doings, and confess them and reveal them."[3]

You who pray! "Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?"[4] Is it not enough for you to see weakness in men? Do you wish to see weakness in God Himself, and secretly think that God cannot fulfil your petition? Many things are difficult and many quite impossible to men; but how can you consider anything difficult for God? Indeed, can anything be difficult or impossible to Him? All things are possible and easy to Him. "For with God all things are possible."[5] Thus, when you pray, be firmly convinced that for the Lord everything is easy, that He can do everything in a moment. Do not ascribe to God your own impotency to do anything, or to help yourself or your neighbour in any way. For you as a weak, insignificant creature nearly everything is difficult; you have experienced this a thousand times upon yourself and others; but "is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?"—that is, is it not enough for you to ascribe difficulty and weakness to men, but must you ascribe similar difficulties to the Lord also—the Lord Himself, Who has created everything by the thought and word? Remember that for Him nothing is difficult. Ask Him boldly for everything; hope to receive everything from Him. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."[6]

The holy angels and other heavenly powers are full of pure, holy life, of unbroken peace, of unchangeable vigour, of eternal courage and strength, of indescribable beauty, light, and wisdom, of the purest love for God and men, of mutual friendship, of Divine light and enlightenment: such are also our holy guardian-angel. What a wonderful nature the angels have! But Christians who become worthy of attaining to the future life and to the resurrection from the dead will be equal to the angels, according to the word of the Lord Himself. Let us, then, zealously strive after that endless, unchangeable, undisturbed life.

Christian! thou art to be united to the angels, archangels—all the heavenly powers. Imitate the angels; despise earthly things;

[1] Wisdom vii. 23. [2] St. Luke xv. 7, 10.
[3] Fourth Prayer of St. Simeon the Metaphraste before Holy Communion.
[4] Isaiah vii. 13. [5] St. Mark x. 27. [6] St. Matthew xxi. 22.

love that which is heavenly, eternal, spiritual; shun worldly passions; do not serve the belly, the demon of covetousness; be gentle, meek, calm as an angel, pure as an angel, simple and holy as an angel.

Contemplate in man his Divine origin, the soul, which is created after the image and likeness of God; and for the sake of this origin always respect and love man with your whole heart, unfeignedly.

It is quite an ordinary matter for the word to become incarnate We speak by means of separate sounds: what else is this but an incarnation of the word? We inscribe words upon paper: is not this again an incarnation of the word?

What is faith? Sureness of spiritual truth, of That Which Is, or of God; of the existence of the spiritual world with all its properties, similarly as we are sure of the existence of the material world with all its appurtenances. To believe means to be as sure of the reality of the spiritual world with all its properties and appurtenances as we are of the existence of the material world with all its objects and their properties. For instance, I am undoubtingly sure that God is eternal, all-good, all-wise, and almighty; and I do not for a moment think that He is not eternal, not all-good, not all-wise, not almighty. This signifies that I believe firmly and undoubtingly. I believe further that the Lord, being Mercy Itself, shall give everything that we ask Him, and I do not in the least doubt in this: this means that I believe.

The name of God is God Himself. Therefore it is said: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;"[1] or "the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;"[2] or, again, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto Thy name."[3] As the Lord is the most incomplex Being, the most incomplex Spirit, He is wholly contained in one word, in one thought, being at the same time wholly everywhere—in all creatures. This is why, if you only call upon the name of the Lord, you call upon the Lord Himself, the Saviour of those who believe, and you shall be saved. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."[4] "Call upon Me [My Name] in the time of trouble: so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise Me."[5]

The whole man, consisting of the soul and body, is called by a single name or word—for instance, John—in the token of the

[1] Exodus xx. 7; Deuteronomy v. 11. [2] Psalm xx. 2.
[3] Psalm cxlii. 7. [4] Acts ii. 21. [5] Psalm l. 15.

fact that man is brought into existence by the Word of God, which is incomplex. Besides this, the name signifies that our soul is likewise an incomplex being. Under one name is concealed such a wealth and depth of the human spirit, such a multitude of divisible parts of matter. This is truly the image and likeness of God, and at the same time a small world in itself.

The soul of the man is in the man's name; for instance, the soul of John is in the name of "John." Thus, at the appellation my soul recognises itself in the name, and answers to it. Thus, in the name of Jesus Christ dwells Christ Himself, wholly, His Soul and Body, united to the Godhead.

God is an infinite Spirit. In what does this infinity consist? In the infinity of being life and wisdom, mercy and love, omnipotence, righteousness, and holiness, in His omnipresence in all thinking, spiritual, and dumb creatures, as well as in material creation. God is everywhere, and in all things, above all, not contained by any creature; and not one single thought, however rapid and bold it may be, can in any way exceed Him, but it ever moves in Him only.

The Hebrews ate the flesh of the sacrificed animals; this was an image of our spiritual food. Now we eat, not the bodies of sacrificed animals, but the Most-pure Body and Blood of the Lord, throughout the whole earth. Therefore he who often communicates of the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ should not require to eat any animal food. Why should I require any animal flesh when I partake of the Most-pure Body and the Most-pure Blood—these life-giving Mysteries of my God? Do they not contain sufficient life, peace, joy, spiritual and bodily strength for me? Can I not be satisfied with only vegetable and fish food, which is much lighter for me?

What is there wonderful in the Lord's offering you His Body and Blood as food and drink? He Who gave you as food the flesh of the animals He created, has finally given you Himself as food and drink. He who fed you at your mother's breasts now feeds you with His own Body and Blood, in order that in the same manner as with your mother's milk—you absorbed it into yourself in your infancy certain of your mother's qualities—her spirit—so you may absorb into yourself, together with the Body and Blood of Christ the Saviour, His spirit and life. Or as previously in your infancy you were fed by your mother and lived by her—by her milk—so now, having grown up and become a sinful man, you are fed with the Blood of your Life-giver, in order that through this you may live and spiritually

grow into a man of God, a holy man. In short, that as you were then your mother's son, so now you may become God's child, brought up and fed with His Body and Blood, and, above all, with His Spirit (for His Body and Blood are spirit and life[1]; and that you should become an heir of the heavenly kingdom, for which reason you were created, and for which you live.

Children! remember that Jesus Christ so loves you that He calls you several times every year to His Divine and Life-giving table, at which He gives you, as food, His own Divine, Most-pure Body; and, as drink, His Divine, Most-pure, Life-giving Blood, in order that you should live not only here temporarily, but also in heaven eternally, endlessly: and therefore be very, very thankful to your Creator and Saviour for His immeasurable love to you, to your parents, to your brothers and sisters, and to all men.

Christian hope is our hope in Christ and in the eternal bliss promised us by Christ. He is the limit of our desires: "He shall save His people from their sins."[2] Many Christians say: "I should like to go to Paradise, but my sins will not let me;" but those who speak thus have no idea of Christian hope: they look upon sins as a kind of indestructible wall. No; I say that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, has destroyed this very wall by His cross and death, and has opened God's Paradise to all those who repent. Let us stand firmly in this, in order to teach how to trust in Christ, for not every hope is the Christian, true, and saving hope. We will point out the properties of Christian hope, its soundness, firmness, and fulness, as well as the signs by which we may know whether we have Christian hope in us; we will point out that Christian hope breathes by means of prayer as by air, is maintained and strengthened by means of the Life-giving Mysteries, by the reading and hearing of the Word of God, and of the writings of the Holy Fathers, and by the good works of each of us. Here we will mention that as the Christian is a free and reasonable being, created after the image and likeness of God, but having fallen (of his own will) or withdrawn himself from God by his iniquities, therefore he himself must draw near to His Prototype by means of faith, hope, and love. Let us advise every Christian to consider carefully what specially constitutes the God-like, immortal man in him; let us beseech him to turn his attention to his heart, to listen to its requirements, which very often disclose themselves to the man's consciousness, and to satisfy such requirements without delay. Our heart requires faith in God and union with Him, in Whom it finds peace and blessedness;

[1] St. John vi. 63. [2] St. Matthew i. 21.

but it is also tempted by the action of the spirit of darkness and inborn corruption, by all the earthly goods, which do not constitute its peace, life, and blessedness, but only sorrow and anguish. To unite this heart to Christ by means of faith and hope—this is our last wish for you in our present sermon on the subject of Christian hope; to break off your trust in earthly blessings, in men, honours, riches, sensual pleasures—this is our sole desire. We sink in sins, and often despond, despair, and perish from their multitude. To turn the attention of all to our Hope—to Christ the Saviour—in all sins, in all sorrows, in all the changes of life, both in happiness and in misfortune; to show that He is the God of those who repent, and the Saviour of those who sin—this is our desire. To show that in Christ is our life, our blessedness, our light, our riches, our meat and drink, our all; and to teach all to strive after Him during all their life, as the limit of all our desires—this is what we wish above all things. Jesus is the ever-living Source. I would desire to so lead you that each one of you should with all his heart call Jesus his Jesus, his Saviour. God grant that it may not fall to us to exclaim: "Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?"[1]

The Lord is Truth: everything that He has said is pure truth, and does not admit of even a shadow of doubt. Thus, there is the hope that God shall come again to judge the quick and the dead, that there shall be a life of the world to come, the bliss of the righteous and the torments of sinners.

Christian hope may be thus characterised: pray and hope, struggle and hope, strive to enter in at the strait gate.[2] "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."[3]

He who comes to the Holy Cup with any passion in his heart, the same is a Judas, and comes to kiss the Son of Man flatteringly.

Prayer hopes to receive all things. Thrice-radiant Love, have mercy upon me!

I do not know how any sensible man can possibly doubt in any divinely-revealed truth, revealed by Jesus Christ, certified by the Apostles, sealed by the blood of the innumerable throng of martyrs, preached by the prelates and venerable men of the Church and by all the Saints, and giving life to the heart. And yet there are unfortunate persons who waver, actually waver,

[1] St. John xii. 38; Isaiah liii. 1. [2] St. Matthew vii. 13.
[3] Colossians iv. 2.

being shaken by some inward insinuations heavy as a stone, gnawing as a viper, destructive as the Devil; they are deceived by some unknown, invisible flatterer, some pitiless murderer. What is the reason of this? Why am I myself at times so irrational, foolish, abnormal, and, in addition to all this, gloomy and despondent besides? O, I know why: "Ye shall know them by their fruits."[1] By these terrible conditions of my soul I can ascertain the cause; by the traces of the murderer I find the murderer. This is mine enemy's doing—the Devil. The murderer! it is he who kills my soul by doubt and unbelief; it is he who torments me. But I myself am also unwise in allowing myself to listen to the insinuations of the liar, the murderer, the adversary of God and men. When you observe in yourself any mental antagonism against God, any doubt in the Trinity of the Persons of the Godhead and their mutual relations, and so on—believe that the enemy of God and men has entered into you. You have long believed in the Holy Consubstantial, Life-giving, and Undivided Trinity; you have long enjoyed Its mercies, Its life, Its peace, and all blessings, and therefore stand by It until death against the common enemy.

Faith gives rest and joy; unbelief, troubles and wounds.

When praying, do everything with understanding. When you pour oil into the lamp burning before an icon, represent to yourself that the Life-giver every day, every hour, every minute supports your life by His Spirit, and, as daily by means of sleep in bodily respects, through prayer and the Word of God in spiritual respects, pours into you the sacred oil of life, by means of which your soul and body burn. When you place a candle before an icon, remember that your life is like a burning candle, that it will burn out and be extinguished, or that some other reasons, such as the passions, surfeiting, wine and other pleasures, make it burn faster than it should.

The means for confirming and strengthening Christian hope in us are—prayer, especially frequent sincere prayer, the confession of our sins, the frequent reading of the Word of God, and, above all, the frequent communion of the Holy Life-giving Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Our guides in Christian hope are—the Lord Himself, His Most-pure Mother, all the saints, prophets, Apostles, martyrs, prelates, and venerable persons; they all turned to God with the hope of salvation, and not one of them was ashamed; all were

[1] St. Matthew vii. 16.

saved. "Hope maketh not ashamed,"[1] says the Scripture, and it did not make them ashamed.

The expression of Christian hope, in relation to earthly life, is—the forgiveness of the sins in which we live all our life. "And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins."[2] In relation to the heavenly life: "we shall see Him as He is,"[3] . . . . "Shine forth as the sun."[4] . . . . "Where I am, there shall also My servant be. . . . . I go to prepare a place for you."[5] . . . . "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body."[6]

Here is another subject for hope. The passions assault your heart, their attack is violent, it is difficult to withstand them, not to succumb to them; but have hope in Christ, and you shall conquer them. Say: "From my youth up many passions have afflicted me; but Thou, my Saviour, Thyself deliver me and save me."[7]

The misfortunes of Christians arise from their not having Christian hope. A man feels the oppression of sin in his heart the weariness and anguish of sin: if he has not Christian hope in his heart, what does he do? He has recourse to artificial means to drive away the oppression and weariness, to culpable distractions, and not to Christ, Whose "yoke is easy" for our heart and Whose "burden is light,"[8] not to prayer, not to repentance for his sins, not to the Word of God, which "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, comfort."[9] So it happens in most cases. Hence the necessity for worldly people to have theatres and a multitude of other amusements. Some have recourse to suicide. The experience of obtaining that which we pray for greatly strengthens Christian hope in our heart. And he who is attentive to himself will easily observe this experience.

He who prays should hope to move the Lord to forgive him all his sins: "I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst Me";[10] "for there is no sin that can overcome God's loving kindness."[11] "The Blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us

[1] Romans v. 5. [2] 1 John ii. 1, 2. [3] 1 John iii. 2.
[4] St. Matthew xiii. 43. [5] St. John xii. 26; xiv. 2.
[6] Philippians iii. 20, 21. [7] First Antiphon, from the Liturgy.
[8] St. Matthew xi. 30. [9] 2 Timothy iii. 16; Romans xv. 4.
[10] St. Matthew xviii. 32.
[11] Fourth Prayer of St. Simeon the Metaphrast before Communion.

from all sin." [1] "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." [2]

Hope presupposes the expectation of some kind of blessing which we do not possess. "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." [3] But as our greatest blessing is sinlessness, and we do not possess this blessing, but daily suffer from the sins that can eternally ruin us, therefore Christian hope ought to be turned to Christ as to the Deliverer from sins and our Saviour.

As we receive everything necessary for our physical life from earth, fire, and water, so also we receive everything necessary for our spiritual life—all bright, good, and saving thoughts and dispositions of the heart—from God, though we do not notice this because of the invisibility of the thoughts and movements of the heart. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof . . . . so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." [4] "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." [5]

When you receive the Holy Life-giving Mysteries, steadfastly represent to yourself Christ Himself under the form of the bread and wine; make upon them the mental inscription "Jesus Christ," and with this mental inscription (whilst the sentient one already exists) send in thought into the depths of your heart, and there lay and mentally preserve the Life-giving Guest. If thus, with such faith, you receive the Holy Mysteries, you will see that they will bring forth in you the deepest peace of your spiritual powers, and you will feel most wonderfully happy and light. The Lord loads us with benefits according to the measure of our faith; the Body and Blood show themselves to be life-giving, burning embers in the believer's heart, according to the measure of his heart's preparedness. The Church is heaven; the altar, the throne of life, from which God descends in the holy and most pure Mysteries to feed and give life to believers. "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty!" [6] Thou preparest us beforehand for the contemplation of the throne, and of Him Who sitteth upon it, by seeing the earthly throne in the Church, and by the contemplation, with the eyes of faith, of Him Who sitteth upon it.

When you ask God for spiritual gifts—for instance, for wisdom, faith, hope and love, meekness and humility—then remember that you are the image and likeness of God, that your

[1] 1 John i. 7. [2] 1 John ii. 1. [3] Romans viii. 25.
[4] St. John iii. 8. [5] 2 Corinthians iii. 5. [6] Revelation xv. 3.

soul is as though an impression of the Godhead, and that all the riches of the soul are contained in God as in a treasury ("Treasury of blessings"), from which we can draw every spiritual blessing by means of the prayer of faith and patience, and by cleansing ourselves from every impurity. Say to the Lord: "My limited spirit came forth from Thine unlimited, most perfect Spirit; here am I, my Master, poor in wisdom and understanding, or in faith, hope and love, meekness and humility: look upon the desire of my heart, and grant unto me Thy great wisdom, 'Faith unashamed, sure hope and love unfeigned.'"[1]

The obedience of her children to the Church should begin with perfect trust in her prayers, sacraments and rites, and end in the active fulfilment of her laws and regulations.

With your spiritual eyes, you clearly see how the Lord keeps you in obedience to Him through the laws of conscience.

Those who go to attend the Divine service after having eaten much, voluntarily lay upon themselves an unnecessary and injurious burden, and deaden their hearts beforehand to prayer, obstructing the access of holy thoughts and feelings to it. We must be most careful not to eat before Divine service. We must remember that "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink,"[2] that is, that God cannot reign in the heart that is overburdened with surfeiting and drunkenness.

The Lord is so near to each one, especially to the Christian who leads a holy life, that his heart and body are the temple of the Holy Ghost. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you."[3] Therefore, how easy it is to pray in every place! The word of the prayer, or God, to Whom you pray, "is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart."[4]

Sin closes the spiritual eyes; the thief thinks that God does not see; the fornicator, giving himself up to impurity, thinks that God does not see him; the covetous, the greedy, the drunkard, think that they can hide themselves and their sinful passions. But God sees and judges. "I was naked, and I hid myself"[5]—so by his actions, says every sinner, hiding himself from the omnipresent God.

The Lord's Divine and life-giving Mysteries are an evident proof that He sees all things and is always with us. In them

[1] Eighth Prayer of the Priest at Matins.
[2] Romans xiv. 17.
[3] 1 Corinthians vi. 19.
[4] Romans x. 8.
[5] Genesis iii. 10.

He allows us to touch Him, to thrust our spiritual hands into His side, and to put our fingers into the print of the nails.[1]

As often as I prayed with faith, the Lord always heard me and fulfilled my prayers.

For the greater part we live in doubt, unbelief, and incredulity. "Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? have ye your heart yet hardened?"[2] We must be careful not to let our hearts wax gross.

Man is the image of God—a living image of the living God; in the soul of man, especially of a believing and virtuous one, the light of the Godhead, of Its perfection is reflected. "Be ye holy, for I am holy."[3]

The soul of the first man came from God, likewise, all the souls of the men that followed; all men are the breathing of His Divine Spirit, all ought to be His children, all as one. "As Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee," prayed the Saviour to the heavenly Father, "that they also may be one in us."[4] See how high our origin and destination are! Through Jesus Christ we ought to be one with God, and where He is, there we ought also to be. "Where I am, there shall also my servant be."[5] As our souls are from God, He, of course, is very near to us, as near as parents are to their children. As parents know their children, much more does the Lord know His people, His children, by grace in Christ. "I know My sheep."[6]

In ordinary human knowledge, we learn some subject once thoroughly, and often know it well during the whole of our lifetime without our knowledge of it becoming obscured. But in the matter of religion and faith this is not so; we think that once we have learnt, felt, and touched it, the subject will always remain clear, tangible, and beloved of our soul; but it is not so: it will a thousand times become obscured to us, removed from us, and will as though vanish for us, so that at times we feel quite indifferent to the object by which we used to live and breathe, and it will sometimes be necessary to clear the way to it for ourselves by sighs and tears, in order to see it clearly again, to grasp and embrace it with our heart. This is caused by sin.

The word, even in our mouths, shows itself to be creative, forming separate sounds; with the word the living spirit comes

[1] St. John xx. 25.
[2] St. Mark viii. 17, 18.
[3] 1 Peter i. 16; Leviticus xix. 2.
[4] St. John xvii. 21.
[5] St. John xii. 26.
[6] St. John x. 14.

forth from the man, not separated from the thought and word. You see, therefore, that the word, by its nature, is creative, even in us. Why, then, should we be incredulous and distrustful of the creative power of the word, for instance, in prayer, that this power—this verbal service—shall unfailingly bring down the mercy of the Lord upon us. Thus the word continually creates itself flesh—separate sounds and writings, for are not our books the flesh, in which the word is clothed? But we have grown so accustomed to this, that it does not appear to us worthy of special attention. Not only the nature of the Godhead, but also, by His gift, the nature of created animated creatures is creative under God's direction: "Be fruitful, and multiply."[1] The souls of living creatures grow bodies for themselves, under God's direction. Thus men, by the power given to them from God, are fruitful, and multiply upon the earth; thus men and animals create for themselves everything necessary for their lives, especially men—these most inventive beings who amaze by their infinite creative genius in all kinds of arts. As the Word, the Creator Himself, is omnipresent, so His creations are everywhere spread, though not in infinity, and He creates everywhere, and, if necessary, changes.

God is such an incomplex Being, that He is quicker than lightning, quicker than thought, and imperceptibly visits our soul. This is why the Lord says: "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: for behold, the Kingdom of God is within you."[2] "Is within you," that is, it is impossible even to distinguish the moment of the coming of the Kingdom of God into our soul: as soon as we have cast out sin from our heart, the Kingdom of God is in it, and we do not observe when and how this is accomplished; the moment of perfect rejection of sin from the heart is the moment of God's perfect reign within us. Also, the life-giving Mysteries, in accordance with the measure of our faith, instantaneously cleanse, sanctify, and adorn the chamber of the soul. Likewise, the Devil and the evil spirits, as incomplex beings—though far from perfect in their incomplexity, and very limited—act upon the soul rapidly, instantaneously, as rapidly as lightning or thought. A momentary feeling of attachment to earthly things, or a momentary inclination of the heart to sin, a momentary doubt in the truth, and Satan penetrates into the heart, producing in a moment some violent passion in it, and afterwards, according to the measure of our sympathy with such a passion, he takes possession of us and drags us where he pleases as prisoners, bound hand and foot. If we resist him, then, by darkening our mind and heart, he strives to destroy our

[1] Genesis i. 28. [2] St. Luke xvii. 20, 21.

efforts after hearty faith and pious thoughts and feelings. In order to vanquish and drive him from your heart, you must bring into your heart perfect faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and remember that the enemy is working in you, that your thoughts, or the inclinations of your heart and will, are sinful, ungodly. Then firmly cast these thoughts out of your heart; break away, so to say, with all your heart and strength from the fetters of sin, as Samson did when bound with cords, and by the power of Jesus Christ and the grace of the Holy Ghost, you shall tear asunder the bonds of hell like a thread.

When praying, we must remember that we are members one of another, and therefore that we must pray for all, as the prayer "Our Father . . ." teaches us. The Apostles and all the saints are examples of this. If we remember this, and pray for others, then the holy angels will also pray for us, as members of the one Kingdom of Christ, of the one Church, of one body. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."[1]

The Lord is my life, my breath, my strength, my light, peace and joy, my food and drink; what shall I bring to such a Benefactor, or what shall I render unto Him? I will render unto Him, with His help, obedience to His Will, the fulfilment of His commandments. "If ye love Me," says He Himself, "keep My commandments."[2] I will endeavour to please Him by seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and by counting earthly blessings as naught in comparison to heavenly ones; I will not let my heart cleave to anything earthly. O, Lord! grant me strength to accomplish this. Strengthen me Thyself by Thy right hand. My Strength, do not forsake me! Grant that I may put my trust in Thee alone, my Nourisher—in Thee, Who hast never forsaken me!

Life is the vivifying power. Therefore God, as the first source of life, and the cause of life, is infinite Power, vivifying all. This is also why the angels are called the heavenly powers: the human soul is also power. The angels and men are powers vivified by the first Life, borne, guided, and strengthened by the first Power in their reasonable and free service to the first Life. Death is the destructive power. The first power of this kind that appeared in the kingdom of the living God, Who created all things for life, was in the person of the Devil, and from him it passed to men and other earthly creatures, "for the creature was made subject to the bondage

[1] St. Matthew vii. 2. [2] St. John xiv. 15.

of corruption, by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same."[1] That is, man, who subjected himself to the first destructive power, the Devil. As the Devil is a mental power, therefore, he acts by the power of his infernal mind upon our minds, originally perverted by his breathing, and separates us from God the Life by doubt and mistrust in God, the Power that is almighty and unchangeable in its attributes; he separates us from God Who is Love by the spirit of enmity, malice, and envy; he separates us from God the Spirit by strongly attaching our heart to earthly blessings. We observe that in the sinful, unnatural attachments of our heart there is a power working that is destructive to our soul—as, for instance, in malice, doubt, and all sins, in despondency, despair, and in resistance to God's commandments. On the other hand, the Lord God reveals Himself in our soul chiefly as the power of love: "The love strong as death,"[2] as the power of all virtues, overcoming all obstacles set against the soul by the powers of hell.

During prayer, before the icons or without them, it is necessary to always have full hope of receiving that which we ask for—for instance, deliverance from afflictions, spiritual sickness, and sins, because we have already a thousand times experienced that we do clearly obtain mercy from the Lord or Our Lady; and therefore, not to hope to obtain that which we ask in prayer, or to doubt in the fact of our prayers being heard, would be the greatest foolishness and blindness.

If anyone would ask you why you pray to soulless icons, what profit you derive from them, say that we derive incomparably greater profit from our icons than we do from the kindest and most benevolent living persons; say that blessed power and help to our souls always comes to us from icons, saving us from sins, sorrows, and sicknesses; especially from the icons of the Saviour and of the Mother of God; that one single look with faith upon them, as upon the living and those who are near to us, saves us from cruel sorrows, passions, and spiritual darkness; that if touching the Saviour's garment, and the garments and handkerchiefs of the Apostles could restore health to the sick, much more are the images of the Saviour and of the Mother of God powerful to heal believers of every affliction, in accordance with their faith in the Lord and in His Mother.

My soul can imagine millions of images, for instance, of the One same Mother of God, and my hand can delineate as many images of Her as I please, and they will all be worthy

[1] Romans viii. 20. [2] The Song of Solomon viii. 6.

of reverence, as She Herself is. Thus the supernatural and life-giving Unity has devised, created through Its creative Word, and sanctified through the Holy Ghost, the innumerable multitudes of Its reasonable images—the heavenly powers. Thus, likewise, the Father has devised and the Son, Himself the living image of the Father, has created, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, His own sentient and reasonable image—man, and from him alone, to our continual wonder, until now, creatively forms such images, which are all living, beautiful, godlike, lasting, and eternal. Likewise, whatever quantity of icons I may paint, all of them are true and worthy of reverence to me, and I will undoubtedly reverence them if only they correspond to God's real, holy images (icons). What prevents our having as many holy images, for instance, of the Saviour Christ as there are separate Christian persons? Every image of the Saviour is His image, most worthy of reverence, shining in the soul of every true Christian.

It is an excellent custom with Christians, and one pleasing to God, to have an icon of the Saviour and to pray to Him before it. This is a crying necessity of our soul. The Lord Himself, with the love which is proper to Him, desires to be formed in us, as the Apostle says: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you"[1]; or "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."[2] But how can I form Christ in my heart if I do not first represent Him sensibly before my eyes? Thus we have images of the Saviour, of the Mother of God, and others. The love of Christians for them, desiring to always carry their images in their thoughts and hearts, as well as our nature, which is both carnal and spiritual, has called forth the necessity of representing Them on painted icons, placing them in the most honoured places of the house, as in our hearts or the chambers of our soul, and of reverencing them by bowing to them, first spiritually, and then bodily. And how in accordance with God's intention our veneration of icons is! Heaven itself replies to us from the icons, as the Lord in olden times replied from the mercy-seat in the Hebrew tabernacle; many of them shine by miracles.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."[3] This means that the Lord continually stands at the doors of our heart, closed or being closed to Him by sins or various passions. "Behold, I stand." You pray, and He stands at your very heart, and is attentive to every movement and feeling of your heart.

[1] Galatians iv. 19. [2] Ephesians iii. 17. [3] Revelation iii. 20.

Lord! grant me a simple, kind, open, believing, loving, and generous heart, worthy of being Thy dwelling-place, O Most Gracious!

When speaking with any man we are sure that he hears us, notwithstanding the distance separating us, which is sometimes considerable; we are sure of this, because we receive corresponding replies from him, and our words produce the same ideas and inclinations in his heart as in our own. Or when we speak in a numerous assembly, we are sure that the whole assembly hears us at the same time, and that if our words proceed from the heart, they also fall into the hearts of those who hear us, and bring forth good thoughts and inclinations in them. Similarly, when conversing in prayer with God or with the saints, we should be sure, without the slightest doubt, that our words, if pronounced from the whole heart, are heard (not to speak of God, Who is everywhere present, and knows all things, and our very hearts themselves) not only as our words would be heard by living persons, but even much more easily on account of the incomplexity of the spiritual world; and the answers to our prayers will also be given with greater ease and be wiser and more useful than those of earthly persons to our requests, owing to the same incomplexity and Divine enlightenment of the heavenly dwellers. This must be counted as truth, requiring no proofs, as the most ordinary matter. As in the first case, everyone is sure by experience of being heard by other men, so it is likewise in this last case.

God and the saints hear us during our prayer as men hear each other when talking among themselves, or as people standing in church hear the preacher, or soldiers the voice of their commander, with the difference that God and the saints hear our prayers incomparably better and more perfectly, because when we hear the words of an ordinary man we do not know what is in his heart and thoughts, and it may happen that a person says one thing whilst he has quite another in his heart.

But with God and the saints it is not so; they see all that is in our thoughts and in our heart—God Himself by His omniscience, and the saints by the grace of the Holy Ghost, in Whom they eternally rest. They see whether our words really correspond to the feeling of our heart, and if so, and the heart itself on its part is a believing, contrite, and humble one, burning with love and zeal (for "we earnestly have recourse to Thee"), as well as with a desire to obtain what we ask for, then they are favourably inclined to accept our prayer and give us what we desire. God and the saints wish that during our prayer we

should represent them to ourselves as living, present with us; that we should see them with our spiritual eyes. God is living. "For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him."[1]

We see everywhere upon the earth the Artist-Spirit rejoicing His creatures with the fulness of joy, and revealing His infinite wisdom in the works of His hands. We see everywhere the Life-giving Spirit forming, like an artist or a potter, multifarious inanimate and animate vessels. Especially we see Him in holy men, as in His own grand and beautiful temples. But in the unbelieving and impious we see at almost every step the works of the evil spirit—all passions, disturbances, enmity, and opposition.

God is the being and life of everything that exists. This is why He is called That Which Is, as though the sole being, the first uncreated being, or as the Head from Whom every being comes. This is why the Apostle says of Him: "For in Him we live and move and have our being."[2] We live in God, we move by His power, we exist by His Will, command, and omnipotence.

You do not understand how the Lord takes up His abode in the Holy, life-giving Mysteries. It is a mystery, like the mystery how the immortal and life giving Spirit takes up His abode in your body, adorning and strengthening it. The Lord is an incomplex Being, entirely distinct from matter, as incomplex as a thought or momentary movement of our heart or spirit. It is also a mystery, similar to the mystery of how He dwells entirely in your heart without the medium of any matter, but only through one lively thought of Him, through lively faith in Him or obedience to His Word. By His most perfect incomplexity He is necessarily wholly everywhere—"Who art everywhere present and fillest all things:"[3] "Do not I fill heaven and earth?"[4]—and He cannot be divided, though dividing Himself amongst all, and communicating Himself truly and actually in various gifts, being Himself One and Indivisible, continually creating an infinite and diverse multitude of creatures, being wholly present in every creature, down to the last and smallest infusoria.

The whole air can be penetrated by the sunlight, is transparent, and is wholly, so to say, dissolved in the light, though this last, on account of its rarity, can always leave it. Light

[1] St. Luke xx. 38.
[2] Acts xvii. 28.
[3] Prayer to the Holy Ghost.
[4] Jeremiah xxiii. 24.

also penetrates and is dissolved in spring water, crystal, and glass. A multitude of bodies, capable of reflecting and refracting the rays of light, are suffused with, or shine by, the light of the sun or the light of fire, and receive its warmth into themselves. On garments embroidered with gold and silver every sparkle shines separately by the light of the sun. Likewise, the chosen human race or the souls of the righteous are penetrated by the mental Light—God, and shine forth in His light, being dissolved in Him. Thus, also, each particle of the life-giving Mysteries, becoming the Body and Blood of the Lord Himself, is all light, brightness, warmth, life; not a single, smallest particle remains unchanged into the light and life of the Godhead.

Observe how the Lord is always with you in every place, in His image and likeness, which are in yourself. You think by the Father, you speak by the Word, and you act in the Holy Ghost. What air and light are to the body, the same is the thought, or God the Father, to the soul; what food is to the body, the same is the Word to the soul; what breath and warmth are to the body, the same is the Holy Ghost to the soul.

Have you seen how the bees follow their queen-bee, or how the ants follow their king-ant? Thus should reasonable beings, endued with speech, follow God. Or do you not know that the minor planets follow the larger, and revolve around it? Thus should reasonable beings endued with speech follow the God of all. The family is a little image of the innumerable family of the powers moving around God and in God. An empire or a king and his subjects are larger images of the heavenly powers moving around the Almighty, the King of Glory.

As, during a conversation between men, the air, which is everywhere and fills all things, serves as a medium between the word of one and the word of another, and the words of one reach the hearing of another through the air, and it would be impossible to speak and hear without air—so in spiritual respects the Holy Ghost, "Who is everywhere present and filleth all things,"[1] is a similar medium in our communion with the bodiless ones. We do not thoroughly understand how, by means of air, our words are heard by others, sometimes at a great distance, yet we know that they are heard; likewise, we do not understand how the holy angels and saints hear, in the Holy Ghost, the wail of our hearts; yet we know that it is heard. As in the first case we may be assured of our words having been heard by others from the answers, so in the latter we are similarly assured by the answers we receive. In the first case we see the

[1] Prayer to the Holy Ghost.

person with whom we speak with our bodily eyes, and in the latter we see the person with whom we converse with our spiritual eyes. An image is presented to the bodily eye and to the spiritual eye—an invisible person or spirit. For corporal beings there is distance, whilst for the Holy Ghost it does not exist.

Represent the Angel of God to yourself as the image of the human soul—that is, think that an angel is like your own soul. This is why angels appear in human form, because they have a nature similar to that of the human soul, only sinless, holy, and higher.

How speedily God hears the prayer of two or three praying together with the whole heart! "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,"[1] says the Lord Himself.

Our Lord Jesus Christ's purpose for us is to drive away from our hearts falsehood (flattery), pride, and diabolical malice, and to implant in the place of these His truth, love, meekness, and humility.

If we were to represent the Lord's image upon every line of space, even then we should not be doing more than enough, because the Lord is actually and wholly present in every smallest and largest space. If we were to imagine and foresee the Lord everywhere, nothing more would be left to desire, we should only be doing justly; for God is ever at our right hand wherever we may be.

The Holy Ghost is called the "Comforter,"[2] in accordance with His nature, which is peace, joy, and infinite blessedness, and also on account of His action upon the souls of believers, whom He comforts like a mother in their virtues, in their sufferings, sorrows, and sicknesses, and in their great deeds for the faith. He is also called the Comforter in contrast to the evil spirit of despondency that often attacks our souls. Every phenomenon has its cause. Thus having done any good action, you rejoice and find consolation in your soul. Wherefore? Because the Holy Ghost is in you, "Who is everywhere present and filleth all things, the Treasury of blessings,"[3] Who comforts us. On the contrary, if you have done anything wrong, or even sometimes when you have not done anything wrong, you feel a deadly despondency in your soul. Wherefore? Because you have allowed the evil spirit of despondency to take possession of

[1] St. Matthew xviii. 20. [2] St. John xiv. 26. [3] Prayer to the Holy Ghost.

you. For instance, you begin to pray and you are overcome with despondency, whilst before you began to pray you did not feel it; or else you begin to read some book of a spiritual character—for instance, the Holy Scripture—and you are also overpowered with despondency, slothfulness, doubt, incredulity, and unbelief. Wherefore? Because you are tempted by the evil spirits of despondency, doubt, and unbelief, who are using their craftiness against you. Or you are in church, attending Divine service; but you feel dull, heavy, and slothful—despondency has fallen upon you. Again wherefore? Because the evil spirits of slothfulness and despondency are using their craftiness against you. Or, again, you begin to write a religious work—a sermon, for instance—and you feel darkness and coldness in your heart, whilst your body is overcome with weakness. Wherefore? Because the invisible enemies are warring against you. Therefore the Holy Ghost is absolutely necessary to us all in all our good works. He is our power, strength, light, peace, and comfort.

A visible proof of the omnipresence and of the providence of God is presented to us by vegetation. Where is it not to be found upon the terrestrial globe? It covers the plains, it climbs up the inaccessible heights of rocky mountains, it grows in the deserts, spreads its roots in the waters and amongst the waters, upon desert islands. And who is it that gives it growth and adorns it with beautiful varieties of shapes, colours, and flowers? The Lord God. "God so clothes it." But if God so carefully clothes the grass, then shall He forsake and forget man, even for a minute? "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"[1] If God at every instant vivifies the grass, and His life does not forsake it, then shall He cease to give life to me? No; if He clothes and gives life to the grass, then in me He dwells continually, as in His temple, if I do not voluntarily drive Him away by my sins. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"[2] In reference to the temple, we may remark that the Apostle calls a Christian the temple, because the Spirit of God dwells in him. This signifies that God dwells continually in Christian temples. Hence the holiness of the temple; hence the reverence due to it. And the action of God dwelling in the temple is very perceptible upon the hearts of those who turn to Him in prayer.

"He shall call upon Me, and I will hear him."[3] O words most full of love! O words breathing lively trust into him who prays!

[1] St. Matthew vi. 30; St. Luke xii. 28. [2] 1 Corinthians iii. 16. [3] Psalm xci. 15.

Up till now you have not learned to love your neighbour. You answer men's dislike towards you by dislike on your part. But do the contrary; answer others' dislike by heartfelt goodwill and love; the more dislike you see towards you, the more you should love. Dislike is a malady, and a sick person should be more pitied, should be shown greater care and greater love, exactly because he is ill. Do you not know that the bodiless enemy uses his craftiness against all, infects all with the poison of his hatred? And you, too, are not exempt from his craftiness. Do not serve him, then, the spirit of enmity, but serve the God of love with the utmost zeal. Remember that God the Word died for your brethren.

As the rivers flow into the sea, so the souls of men should flow towards God.

The spiritual and bodily lives go apart, do not accord. This is why we sometimes feel very well bodily, but not in spirit. You begin to pray, and you find that your heart has become gross, "Thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness: then he forsook God"[1]—and it is difficult for you to pray, though you may be bodily well and strong. As soon as you cease praying, you will again feel easy. But this is sinful ease.

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."[2] Know what those who pray in the temple are thinking of. They think of that to which their hearts are attached.

If our heart doubts in the life-giving Spirit, then there will be no life in us, but sorrow and straitness, and deservedly: for life comes from the life-giving Spirit. The affliction resulting from such doubt is a sure sign that this doubt is a lie, and proceeds from the Devil, the murderer.

Up till now I have lived in God (I have thought, felt, and been fed by Him); and in future I shall also live in Him. I put aside all restless cares, and trust in my hope, in my breath—in Christ

He that believes in Christ as he should do does not allow himself to doubt even for a moment in the truth of that which the Lord has said in His holy Gospel, in that which is taught by His pure bride, the Church. It is necessary to acquire such steadfastness of heart in faith that it should not in the least, not for one single moment, be shaken of our free-will, by

[1] Deuteronomy xxxii. 15. [2] St. Matthew vi. 21.

duplicity, by an inclination towards the opposite side, in order that a Christian should not be like a "wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed." [1] Our faith in Christ is "yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." [2]

Remember that by believing heartily and steadfastly in Christ we are saved unto the life eternal. Remember, that the holy Church has not allowed a single one of her true followers to perish, but, by the grace of God, has saved them all. The works of the Saviour and those of the Church upon believers speak for themselves. The action of doubt and unbelief in a man's soul, killing his soul and body, also speaks for itself.

As the Spirit of God is a terrible power, the fear and torment of demons, therefore the demons, with all their infernal wiles, resist the Spirit of God and blaspheme Him. As the Spirit of God is a saving spirit, a spirit of union, love, and peace, therefore by every means they oppose the union, love, and salvation of mankind. It was through them that the separation of the Churches into the Eastern and Western arose. Observe: this separation arose from the dogma concerning the Holy Ghost. By their efforts, again, arose the further separation of the Roman West, Lutherism, Calvinism and Anglicanism; through them arose dissent in our Orthodox Church. (By the way ought not needful and beneficial reforms to be introduced into the Church, on account of dissenters? It is necessary to do so; otherwise we shall be mocked at by the demons. Is it possible that we shall allow ourselves to be overcome by their evil? Let not this happen. And therefore the Bible ought to be translated into the Russian language. Otherwise, how many millions are deprived of its riches by reason of its being written in the old Slavonic language, not understood by many! [3]) Besides this, the demons endeavour by every means to uproot, and have partly succeeded in doing so, faith in the Gospel and in Christ's Church from the hearts of Christians—which is also blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. They also endeavour by every means to plunge Christians into carnal works and carnal impurity, in order that the Spirit of God should not dwell in men, as was the case with mankind before the Deluge. And, indeed, do we not see that men are given over to coveteousness, gluttony, drunkenness and profligacy to an enormous degree? What is this corruption that has fallen upon us? O! it will go ill with us, and perhaps very soon. The spirits of evil also attack the Holy Spirit in the thoughts and hearts of separate individuals, shaking their faith

[1] St. James i. 6. [2] 2 Corinthians i. 19, 20.

[3] This was written before the Russian translation of the Holy Scriptures was published by the Holy Synod.

in Him. Woe unto us! Let us not blaspheme the life-giving Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of unspeakable love, "Who maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered"[1]; let us ever remember, during all our life-time, to worship and praise Him as we worship the Father and the Son, with an undivided and equal honour. Let us also honour the universal symbol of faith—this saving guide in the faith for believers, of all times and places. Let us not offend, even by a single thought of doubt, the Spirit of God, dwelling in us and vivifying us—this fulness of God, infinitely loving us, as the Father and the Son.

"We have been all made to drink into one Spirit."[2] From this you see that the Spirit of God surrounds us upon all sides, like water or air. "The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world."[3] Faith is given unto us by the Spirit of God: "to another faith by the same Spirit,"[4] says the apostle. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost,"[5] says the same apostle.

How good it is to conquer the passions! After the victory one feels such lightness of heart, such peace and greatness of spirit!

"Is not the life more than meat?"[6] Ah! immeasurably more, infinitely more. In our soul shines the image of the invisible God, of the Creator of all. I ought not to grudge not merely anything material, but not even my soul, my life, for the material or bodily, and especially spiritual profit of my brother. By lovingly serving my brother I serve God Himself. O! I feel in my heart this great and sublime truth: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."[7] Wherefore? Because, in the first place, every man is an image of God; and secondly, because Jesus Christ is God and man together, and is the Head of the Body—His Church. "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones,"[8] that is, we are members of Christ.

Do not believe your flesh when it threatens to you with weakness during prayer; it lies. As soon as you begin to pray you will find that the flesh will become your obedient slave. Your prayer will vivify it also. Always remember that the flesh is lying.

[1] Romans viii. 26. [2] 1 Corinthians xli. 13. [3] Wisdom i. 7.
[4] 1 Corinthians xii. 9. [5] Romans v. 5. [6] St. Matthew vi. 25.
[7] St. Matthew xxv. 40. [8] Ephesians v. 30.

He who believes in the Saviour, and feeds upon His Body and Blood, has life eternal in himself; and this is the reason why every sin occasions painful suffering and disturbance of heart. But those who have not life eternal in them drink iniquity like water, and do not suffer because life eternal is not in their hearts.

Glory to the Spirit of God, descending from the Father to give life to every creature, and filling the whole universe. Glory to Him, giving life to angels and men and to every creature. Glory to Him, our Power, our Holiness. Glory to Him, co-eternal with the Father and the Son!

My carnal nature requires images. Therefore we rightly and justly make images and reverence them. What else is man himself but a living image of the living God? The Son of God Himself is a uniform impress of the Father, showing us the Father in Himself. If we ourselves are images of God, formed of a soul and body, then why should we not reverence God's saints in their images made with hands? The inscription of the name upon the image means much to the believer. This name is as though it replaces the soul of the person represented on the image. Call upon the name of the saint with your whole soul; he will hear you, and will manifest his miraculous power in the image. The name of the Saviour, called upon with faith, works wonders. It drives away the demons, quenches the fire of the passions, heals sicknesses. The names of the saints, called upon with faith, by the grace of God also work wonders. And what is there astonishing in this? They are all in the Spirit of God, and the life-giving Spirit of God is everywhere present and fills all things. The saints all work wonders by the Holy Ghost, because the one Spirit of God is the Spirit of wonders.

Man is a small world. As the soul is in the body, so God is in the world. When the soul leaves the body it immediately crumbles to pieces. Likewise, when the Spirit of God leaves the world it will immediately crumble to pieces. The soul is throughout the body, but especially in the heart, and God is throughout the world, but especially in heaven and in temples. And therefore recognise at every step the presence of God.

Glory to Thee, all-holy, life-giving "Spirit, proceeding from the Father and ever resting in the Son,"[1] undivided from the Father and the Son! Glory to Thee, Son of God, Who castest out devils by the Spirit of God[2] and orderest our salvation, sanctifying, teaching, and strengthening us by the same Spirit!

[1] Stichera on Trinity Sunday. [2] St. Matthew xii. 28; St. Luke xi. 20.

Glory to Thee, Father, ever condescending to us in the Son by the Holy Ghost! Trinity in undivided unity, have mercy upon us!

Children, being the images of their father and mother, are near to their hearts; but still nearer are men—and especially Christians—the images of God, to the heart of God. The outward and often inward resemblance of children to their parents reminds us of our inward resemblance to God.

Every place is the place of God's presence and sovereignty. Hence it is undoubtedly true that the Lord looks upon us with the eyes of the holy icons as with His own, and can speak to us by the mouths of the holy icons as by His own. Also, owing to the fact that the Lord is in every place, His cross, His name work miracles. His icons show themselves to be wonder-working, and are in every case places of His gracious presence.

My thought freely penetrates edifices and their walls, mountains, seas, heaven, and earth. By his thought man is the likeness of the Godhead, Which is an infinite and omnipresent Spirit. Does not God penetrate and fill all things, as the Creator of all?

Prayer breathes hope, and a prayer without hope is a sinful prayer.

Has each one of us a guardian angel? He has, and must have. The nature of a spirit is extraordinarily active, and cannot remain inactive; we see this in our soul. The nature of a good spirit necessarily seeks activity and the widening of the circle of this activity, and the spreading of the kingdom of truth and good; as, on the contrary, the nature of an evil spirit also seeks an activity corresponding to it, and the spreading of the kingdom of falsehood and of every evil. We feel in ourselves that the demons endeavour by every means to spread the kingdom of evil, and the Scripture, too, bears witness of this: "The Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."[1] How, then, shall we not admit, in accordance with common sense, that the angels act everywhere throughout the world, striving to spread the kingdom of good and seeking the salvation of mankind? O, how true are the words that "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,"[2] and that as there is a devil near every man, so likewise there is an angel near every man! As we clearly feel the presence of the one, so we also feel the presence of the other, although, through self-love,

[1] 1 Peter v. 8. [2] St. Luke xv. 7.

we are in the habit of ascribing all good thoughts, feelings, dispositions, and intentions to ourselves and not to our guardian angel. Would the number of guardian angels be sufficient for every person to have a guardian angel? Abundantly sufficient. When the apostle Peter threw himself with a sword upon the high priest's servant, in order to protect His Master and Lord, then the Lord said unto Him: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?"[1] This signifies that the Lord ever has abundantly sufficient angels to protect every man (Elisha, Jacob), and, above all, to protect the incarnate Son of God. We also know that an angel of God appeared to the Saviour in the garden of Gethsemane to strengthen Him: "Angels came and ministered unto Him,"[2] after the forty days' fast and the temptation in the wilderness. The Infant Saviour's guardian angel appeared to Joseph in sleep and ordered his movements.

Holy Spirit, living, personal, ruling, living bond of the Father and the Son, have mercy upon me!

Holy Spirit, giving life to and uniting all creation, and, above all, to reasonable creatures—power of all creation, have mercy upon me!

When praying, a man must lay aside every worldly care and only care for the salvation of his soul.

We must trust in God in all temptations, in all desolate conditions of the soul. The Lord will deliver.

What a unity of being there is in the three Persons of the Godhead! The Son does not do anything without the Spirit, nor the Spirit without the Father, nor the Father without the Spirit and the Son, but All act conjointly. It is not thus with man. Sometimes he works by the mind without the heart's participation, owing to which his deeds are often soulless. This discord is the consequence of sin. The three strangers: Abraham, two fulfilled the will of the third.

I think how all-perfect the Godhead is—what an infinite fulness of life there is in It! God the Father begat from Himself the creative Word and sends down the creative Spirit, and they supremely fulfil the will of the Father, as a man's hands fulfil that which the head thinks and the heart desires. Wonderful art Thou, our God, creating all things by Thy personal Word,

[1] St. Matthew xxvi. 53. [2] St. Matthew iv. 11.

and accomplishing all things by Thy personal Spirit! What a fulness of life! Both the Son and the Spirit are equal to the Father—the Cause; both the Son and the Spirit are equally almighty, as the Father and the Son are one mercy and love, one will, one power, one Godhead and kingdom! What fulness of life! Both the Son is the Creator and the Spirit is the Creator. "Thy hands" (the Son and the Spirit) "have made me and fashioned me."[1] What unity! Neither does the Son do anything without the Spirit, nor the Spirit without the Son, but together They accomplish the will of the Father, the Three forming one Being. Therefore, wherever you find the Son acting, there also the Spirit infallibly acts with the Son, also the Father, from Whom and to Whom They rise. "I glorify the might of the Father and the Son, and hymn the power of the Holy Ghost, the undivided, uncreated Godhead, the Consubstantial Trinity, reigning unto ages of ages."[2]

Lord our Saviour, Thy Divine greatness consists in the fact that the life of every creature is in Thee, as in the hypostatic Life, "that all men should honour Thee, even as they honour the Father."[3] Thy greatness, life-giving Holy Ghost, consists in the fact that Thou sanctifiest, strengthenest all, and livest together with the Father and the Son, that all men shall honour Thee, even as they honour the Father and the Son. Thy greatness, Holy Ghost, lies also in the fact that the only-begotten Son of God, being consubstantial with Thee, created powers and wonders by Thee, and, likewise through Thee, sanctifies, strengthens, and guides us to His Father. "Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."[4]

"The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men."[5] He who denies the personal being of the Holy Ghost—especially he who was himself many times a receiver of the Holy Ghost—blasphemes against Him; and unless he amends, he shall not be forgiven either in this world or in the next. Life-giving Holy Ghost, Spirit of grace, have mercy upon us!

Those who pray little are weak in heart, and thus, when they wish to pray, their hearts become enfeebled, also their hands, body, and thoughts, and it is difficult for them to pray. It is necessary to overcome oneself, to strive to pray with the whole heart, for it is a good and happy thing to pray with the whole heart.

Trust in the intercession of the Mother of God, of the angels

[1] Psalm cxix. 73. [2] Stichera on Sundays. [3] St. John v. 23.
[4] Ephesians ii. 18. [5] St. Matthew xii. 31.

and saints, is a form of Christian hope. They are powerful in intercession for us, both by the grace of Christ and their own virtues. We do not pray to Them in vain; through their intercession we trust to obtain mercy, the forgiveness of sins, and salvation, as well as temporal blessings—such, for instance, as health, the salubrity of the air, deliverance from misfortunes and sorrows. By praying in the Spirit and by the Holy Spirit to the Saviour, to the Father, to the angels and all the saints, our prayer will become ardent, and tears will stream from our eyes—sweet and happy tears. Glory to the Holy Ghost the Comforter! And what a comfort He is to the soul!

The Saviour and the Comforter, two Persons of the Godhead: the One ever saves from sins, and the Other comforts him who is saved. Their very names are taken from Their deeds, and are always actually justified. He comforts! The Holy Ghost comforts the believing soul, as a mother comforts her child.

God sovereignly changes, by the Holy Ghost, ordinary bread and wine into the life-giving Body and Blood of His Son. From this we clearly see that He is also the Author and Nourisher of our bodily life, and that our bodily life is less important than the spiritual one; because the ordinary bread and wine, nourishing and strengthening our bodily nature, are changed into a better bread—the bread of spiritual life, and the wine into spiritual drink.

The Spirit of God is everywhere. Travel mentally throughout the whole world, everywhere you will see His deeds. By Him men are endued with a higher life. He also gives life to animals, birds, fishes, plants. Everywhere the Body and Blood of the Saviour equally work miracles; everywhere the sacraments have power, and their power is the Holy Ghost.

Concerning honouring and invoking the saints in prayer (on the day of St. Nicholas). What is it founded upon? They are in God; they are rich in spiritual gifts; they are in the land of the living, and in the land of abundance; whilst we are in the land of death and of spiritual hunger. God has taken them unto Himself to preserve our life. "God did send me before you to preserve life,"[1] said Joseph to his brethren. Abraham—Noah. The rich man in hell begged Abraham to send Lazarus. Noah, the deliverer from the deluge. "Blessed is he whose race is in Sion, and who hath kinsmen in Jerusalem."[2]

[1] Genesis xlv. 5.
[2] Isaiah xxxi. 9. (The text is thus rendered in the Slavonic version.)

I rejoice and delight in the infinite perfection of the Godhead; I rejoice and delight that the Godhead is in three Persons, and that each Person is self-hypostatic, and is all-perfect God—One in Three; that the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, and the Holy Ghost is almighty; that the Father is omnipresent, likewise the Son, and likewise the Holy Ghost; that the Father is life, the Son is life, and the Holy Ghost is life; that the Father is love, the Son is love, and the Holy Ghost is love. I rejoice in God the Father, I rejoice in God the Son, and I rejoice in God the Holy Ghost—in one Godhead, the one nature and power, the one Saviour, God, Who loves us. I rejoice that to each of the three Persons of the Godhead, as God, special ruling actions are proper: to the Father, thought and benevolence; to the Son, the realisation of the Father's thought and benevolence; and to the Holy Ghost, accomplishment and quickening.

The Devil sometimes acts in the mind as a troublesome questioner concerning the incomprehensible, as an audacious infringer upon the unapproachable mysteries of the three Persons of the Godhead and their mutual relations. It is necessary to think reverently and most cautiously concerning the Trinity of the Godhead.

Prayer refreshes and enlivens the soul, like outer air refreshes the body. When praying we feel braver and brighter, similarly as we feel physically and spiritually braver and fresher while walking in the fresh air.

"All things that the Father hath are mine."[1] All things that the Spirit hath are also His, excepting the proceeding from the father. Speak equally of the Father and the Son, only separating Their Personal nature. By reason of Their consubstantiality, there is a community of nature.

Learn to pray; force yourself to prayer. In the beginning it will be difficult; but afterwards the more you force yourself, the easier it will be for you to pray. But in the beginning it is always necessary to force oneself.

"O most holy Bishop, Father Nicholas, pray to God for us!" What is the reason that we ask the prayers of the Saints for ourselves? Do they really pray for us? and is their prayer effective? God Himself plainly declared His will to some persons not having nearness to Him, chiefly to sinful men, that they should ask God's people to pray for them. For instance, Abimelech, who took Abraham's wife, was commanded to ask

[1] St. John xvi. 15.

Abraham to pray for him; Job prayed for his friends, in accordance with the evident revelation of God's will; Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and all the prophets prayed; the Lord Himself, in accordance with His human nature, prayed to the Heavenly Father for Peter and for all the disciples. The Saints are worthy of being intercessors for us before God, by their virtues, by their merits, and as those who pleased Him. If earthly justice requires that a certain man nearer to God (for instance, a priest) should pray to God for others, then why should it not be the same in heaven? All the Saints live in God and for us; in God they see our needs, they sympathise with us, they are ready, in accordance with our prayers, to help us. Why in accordance with our prayers, and not otherwise? In order to strengthen us in faith and prayerfulness. Besides, why do even living men wish that others who need their help should ask them for it?

As the Devil wounds the soul in an instant by presenting some unlawful desire or some unrighteous idea to the heart, so God and His guardian angel vivify the soul by an instantaneous flow of holy desires and thoughts. We must be attentive and grateful to the Lord for His spiritual gifts of light.

What does the daily invocation of the Saints signify—of different ones each day, during the whole year and during our whole lifetime? It signifies that God's Saints, as our brethren, only perfect, live and are near us; that they hear us and are ever ready to help us, by the grace of God. We live together with them—in the one house of the Heavenly Father—only on its different halves. We live on the earthly, they on the heavenly half; but we both have a means of communication with each other: for us the prayer of faith and love, for them their spiritual nature, always ready for active help, owing to the love with which their souls are permeated.

"Faith is given to man by the Holy Ghost; therefore no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost."[1] The Holy Ghost was revealed to us by Jesus Christ, Who was conceived and born by the Holy Ghost, Who grew and was strengthened by the Holy Ghost, Who cast out devils by the Holy Ghost, and Who rose from the dead by the Holy Ghost. The apostles, martyrs, the venerable men and prelates, preached concerning the Holy Ghost, and very many of them sealed their teaching concerning the Holy Trinity with their blood.

I myself am all infirmity, misery. God is my strength. This conviction is my highest wisdom, making me blessed.

[1] 1 Corinthians xii. 3.

When Christians come to church to pray to God, then it would seem that they have not one God, but many gods and many idols (and thus they sin against the first and second commandments). Some have themselves for idols of self-love: "Where their treasure is, there will their heart be also."[1]

As you borrow your breath from the air and emit it into the air again—so that you are always surrounded by air, and it penetrates you—so also your soul comes from God and will return again to God, so that you are always in God, and are surrounded on all sides and inwardly filled with Him as with air. This is the meaning of the words "filled with the Spirit."[2]

As you breathe every minute by means of air, so every minute you are mentally either with God or with the Devil, according to your inward disposition. What air is to the body, the spirit of God is to the soul. As you breathe from the air the elements required to nourish your body, so likewise you breathe into yourself from the Spirit of God good inclinations and thoughts.

When I read the Gospel, then it is not I that speak, but the Lord Himself; He Himself is in these words. For He is the Spirit, the Wisdom, or the infinite personal Thought; it is He Himself Who is in these wonderful thoughts and words of the Gospel. Only the word is ours, human; or, rather, even the word is also His; whilst the thought, its essence, truth, is the Lord Himself. I see the same, for instance, in the image of the Saviour or His cross. Again, He Himself is there—my omnipresent Lord is in them, in this image or in that cross, as in the word of the Gospel. His image on the icon or on the cross is only an outward appearance, whilst the essence is He Himself—manifesting Himself everywhere, in everything and through everything, and especially through the images and signs upon which His justly-worshipped Name is inscribed or His representation is drawn. So also He is in the priest's blessing by the sign of the cross, in which He Himself appears, and as though Himself blesses. Hence the importance of a priest's blessing. And even our customary making of the sign of the cross has also God's power, if only we make it with faith. Thus everywhere we may find and feel the Lord.

"If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."[3] As the Searcher of hearts, the Lord knows that men are liable to very frequently trespass, and that, having

[1] St. Matthew vi. 21; St. Luke xii. 34. [2] Ephesians v. 18.
[3] St. Luke xvii. 4; St. Matthew xviii. 21, 22.

fallen, they often rise up again; therefore He has given us the commandment to frequently forgive trespasses, and He Himself is the first to fulfil His holy word. As soon as you say from your whole heart, "I repent," you will be immediately forgiven.

The whole Gospel is the gospel of the kingdom to which Christians are predestined, and forms as though one single promise (all the parables, all the prophecies and miracles); the epistles of the Apostles reveal in greater detail the promises of Christian hope.

"Thy kingdom come"—that is, Thy perfect reign in our hearts!

By my body I am merely earth and ashes, whilst my soul lives and finds its rest in God alone. He is both the clearness of my thought and the strength of my heart; I myself am nothing.

The saints fulfilled the word of the Lord; the Lord fulfils their word; they worked for Him—He does so for them. The Lord Himself said: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."[1] This is why the Lord speedily fulfils the prayers of the Saints for us.

When praying, we must truly sorrow for our sins, and truly repent of them. When enumerating the sins specified in the prayers, we must say them feeling them in our heart as if they were our own. Also we must have an ardent desire not to sin in future by the same sins.

Having the intention of speaking concerning Christian hope, I should reveal to you the promises given by God to us, and the wiles and snares in which the enemy entangles Christians, in order to divert their gaze and trust from priceless hope; they are—the flattery of riches, of earthly pleasures, and of honours. In speaking of Christian hope I should reveal to you the treasury of the blessings promised to us in Christ, to show you the incomprehensible, infinite mercy and the innumerable bounties of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; of the Father—our trust; of the Son—our refuge; of the Holy Ghost—our protection. My God! the infinity of blessings promised to Christians presents itself to my gaze, and at the same time the infinite carelessness of Christians towards these promised blessings, their little faith, and, finally, their unbelief and coldness, trampling under foot the Blood of the Testament and

[1] St. Matthew vii. 2.

neglecting the mystery of salvation. But may the Lord give me a mouth and wisdom,[1] that I may speak with fiery tongues, that with His help I may light the fire of trust in hearts that are cold! Book of the immutable Covenants! tell us of God's promises to the righteous and to the sinful.

Concerning hope in God after having committed sins, whatever they may be—that is, hope of being reconciled to Him after we have given way to anger, or have fallen into despondency, anguish of heart, or have sinned through the passions. It would seem that the hope of the sinner in the forgiveness of his sins and in salvation is nowhere so clearly and powerfully expressed as in the prayers before Holy Communion, in the canons to the Sweetest Lord Jesus, to the Mother of God, to the Guardian Angel, and in the canons to the Saints of the day.

Hope also requires a life corresponding to the hope. Those who hope must not live "as others who have no hope."[2] "Having therefore these promises . . . let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit."[3] "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you"[4]—this is what I ask of God.

"Where I am, there shall also My servant be"[5]—"with Me in My Throne;"[6] "shall be caught up together with them in the clouds . . . so shall we ever be with the Lord"[7]—such is our hope!

Take away from each one the visible thing which he loves above all; ask or take away money from the covetous, dainty food from the glutton, his prerogatives from the ambitious and proud man, call him by an evil name, and you will see what constitutes the hope of each one, what treasure, what passion is his! O, what shameful passions one sometimes meets with! Sometimes a man attaches himself with an impure love to a person of the opposite sex, breathes by it—so to say, feeds on it. O shameful hope! O unclean heart, withdrawn from the Lord! O man, setting his carnal, weak trust in an insignificant creature like unto himself, I will show you Whom you must love! You who burden your hearts by surfeiting and drunkenness, I will show you Who ought to fill your hearts! Money-lover, I will show you of Whom you ought to buy silver tried in the fire! You who seek after pleasures and

[1] St. Luke xxi. 15. [2] 1 Thessalonians iv. 13 [3] 2 Corinthians vii. 1.
[4] 1 Peter iii. 15. [5] St. John xii. 26.
[6] Revelation iii. 12. [7] 1 Thessalonians iv. 17.

honours, seek the honour of the heavenly calling. You who love fine raiment, buy of Him "white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed with righteousness."[1] Despair, despondency, and presumption are sins against hope.

The punishment for sin, and the peace of the conscience after repenting of it, visibly prove that there is one Judge, the Life-giver and our God, Who can save or destroy us, Who has given us life and the laws of life, and chastises us for their violation, and that He is unchangeable.

The holy prophet David calls the soul an eye ("Mine eye is consumed because of my grief"[2]), hearing, a tongue, a hand, a foot or steps ("Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice . . . . my tongue shall sing of Thy righteousness."[3] "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved"[4]). The eye of the soul is not closed even at night.

Take me captive, Lord, in the sweet captivity of Thy Holy Ghost, so that my words may flow "as the rivers in the south"[5] to Thy glory and to the salvation of Thy people! Grant me this sweet and powerful inward impulse to set down upon parchment the fulness of spiritual visions and feelings! Let "my tongue [be] the pen of a ready writer"[6]—of the All-Holy Spirit!

A deep feeling of spiritual poverty, a lamentation at the existence of evil, a thirst after salvation, are to be found in every straightforward and humble soul.

The ringing of bells is a call to converse with God, of children with their Father—a call to appear before Him.

What do we love most in the world? Life and health. Who is our life and health? Jesus Christ. Therefore, if you wish to live, and to eternally live and be blessed, believe in Jesus Christ, and please Him by living in accordance with His Gospel.

Love is God. If you love God, God dwelleth in you, and you in God.[7] Malice is the Devil. The instant you begin to feel malice against your neighbour, the Devil is in you, entering into you like a needle, and endeavouring to become a mountain

[1] Revelation iii. 18; Psalm cxxxii. 9. [2] Psalm vi. 7.
[3] Psalm li. 8, 14. [4] Psalm cxxi. 3. [5] Psalm cxxvi. 4.
[6] Psalm xlv. 1. [7] 1 John iv. 16.

within you, so greatly does he spread, and so heavy is he! And therefore continually love God and your neighbour. Do not admit malice into your heart, even for a single moment; consider it as an illusion of the Devil. Amen.

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind;"[1] whilst malice is impatient, quick to anger, and exacting. Malice is quick to punish, whilst love is quick to indulgence and forgiveness. Charity looks at its own defects, and is reluctant to notice them in others; whilst malice is sharp-sighted to notice the smallest defects of others, and is blind to its own great defects. We see the mote in our brother's eye, and not the beam in our own; this happens often, and most often, notwithstanding God's inward teaching.

Fear malice as you fear the fire; do not admit it into your heart, even upon any plausible pretence, and still less by reason of anything disagreeable to you; malice is always an evil, a child of hell. Sometimes malice enters the heart under the pretence of zeal for the glory of God or the good of our neighbour. Do not believe in your zeal in this case; it is false and unwise; rather be zealous that there should not be any malice in you. God is glorified by nothing so much as by the "charity that beareth all things," and is dishonoured and offended by nothing so much as by malice, under whatever fair appearance it may hide itself. It was under the mask of caring for the poor that Judas, hiding his malice against his Lord, sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. Remember that the enemy unwearyingly seeks your destruction, and attacks you at the time when you least expect it. His malice is infinite. Do not bind yourself by self-love and sensuality, lest they take you an easy prisoner.

God is inexhaustible in his gifts to men. During already 7403 years[2] He abundantly feeds all creatures. Everywhere we see plenty and joy; only the greedy rich lay their hands on and keep in their treasuries too many of God's gifts, which might plentifully nourish hundreds and thousands of poor. Man! believe firmly in God's inexhaustibility in His gifts, and willingly "deal thy bread to the hungry;"[3] the more you give, the more shall God send you. Such is God's law: "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."[4]

Learn always to remember and to pronounce the name of God with great faith, reverence, love, and a grateful heart. Never pronounce it heedlessly.

[1] 1 Corinthians xiii. 4.
[2] Written in the year 1863.
[3] Isaiah lviii. 7.
[4] St. Matthew vii. 2.

Speak and do everything right undoubtingly, boldly, firmly, and decidedly. Avoid doubts, timidity, languor, and indecision. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love."[1] Our Lord is the Lord of powers.

Breathe by faith (by certitude in God's truth), by trust in God, and by love for God and your neighbour. And how can you help yourself in this? By unbelief in the durability of everything earthly; by not putting your trust in earthly blessings, such as food, drink, money, riches, and earthly ties; by not caring for, by being indifferent to everything earthly and perishable. Do not let your heart cling to anything, do not attach yourself to anything. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."[2]

God is love, and I am an image of God; therefore I ought to be all love. God is the most perfect good, free from the least shadow of evil; I am an image of God; therefore I ought also to be perfectly good, without even a shadow of evil. If the enemy will tempt you by food or drink, say to him, "My food and drink are the Body and Blood of my Lord; they cannot be taken from me. As long as I am a priest, I can communicate of them every week and for the greater part several times a week. Besides this, if I seek in myself the kingdom of God, by putting my trust in Him, my Lord, then everything earthly that is needful for me shall be added to me, in accordance with the Scripture." "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."[3] My God is faithful. Inculcate these words into your heart deeply, by meditation.

Do not let yourself be angered by anything; conquer everything by love—all caprices and offences, all kinds of family unpleasantnesses. Know nothing but love. Always sincerely blame yourself, acknowledge yourself as the cause of any unpleasantness. Say, "It is my fault; I am the sinner." Remember, that as you are infirm, so also is your neighbour, and one infirmity is annulled by the other; therefore it is useless to blame the infirm and sinful, if they acknowledge their infirmity. We must blame the Devil, who is so powerful in evil.

The heavenly Father so greatly cares for me, for my life, my salvation, that He did not spare even His only-begotten Son, but sent Him into the world to suffer and die, and feeds

[1] Timothy i. 7; Romans vii. 15. [2] Colossians iii. 2.
[3] St. Matthew vi. 33.

me with His Body and Blood. Is it possible, then, that He should not care for me in less important things, and should deprive me and mine of sufficient means of subsistence? This has not happened until now, and shall not be. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."[1] "The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore."[2]

My life is the infinite Lord, Which Is, the Almighty; I am wholly absorbed in this life. "Who is above all, and through all, and in you all."[3] I am ever before the face of God; I am ever in God, and He in me. Shall I put my trust in food, drink, or money, or in any man? Should I not then be blind? In truth, God is my hope. He is everything to me.

We must strive to remember oftener the words of the Saviour, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven"[4] and the words of the Apostle, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"[5] (by it) to salvation (not flattering, not deceitful, unfeigned, true).

Be especially meek and patient in sickness and in other various unfavourable circumstances; for, spoiled by health, plenty, happiness, and peace, we are then particularly apt to become irritable. Happy are those of us who do not passionately attach themselves to anything, for they are not bound by avarice.

When praying, always remember that you are conversing with God, the Father of bounties and of every consolation, unchangeable, never wearied by our requests; with the Father Who is ever infinitely merciful, wise, all-powerful; for Whom, by His infinite mercy, wisdom, and omnipotence, it is as easy always to fulfil your requests as it is for you to think of them, to desire them; as easy as it is for you to pronounce the words of these requests, and even infinitely easier. Remember this, and never despond during prayer.

"My servant Job shall pray for you; Abraham shall pray for thee . . . Moses . . . Samuel . . . Elijah."[6] The prayers of the Saints for us are pleasing unto the Lord, as coming from His faithful servants.

[1] St. Matthew vi. 33. [2] St. Matthew x. 30, 31. [3] Ephesians iv. 6.
[4] St. Matthew xviii. 3, 4. [5] 1 Peter ii. 2.
[6] Job xlii. 8; Genesis xx. 7, 17; Jeremiah xv. 1; 1 Kings xviii. 36; Psalm xcix. 6.

The Devil continually lies against God in our hearts, especially in respect to God's omnipresence, saying, "God hath forgotten: He hideth away His face;" also, in respect to His justice, "God careth not for it;"[1] also even, in respect to His existence, "There is no God."[2]

God desires us that we should continually turn to Him in prayer, in order to draw to Himself His children, who have become hardened by sin and have withdrawn themselves from Him, in order to cleanse us and enfold us in the embrace of His love, in order to show us that He always has some blessing for us. Thus also do good parents act towards their evil-natured children.

When you hear that God speaks, then represent to yourself His word as deed, either already accomplished, or being accomplished, or about to be accomplished.

Prayer is the living water, by means of which the soul quenches its thirst. When you pray, represent to yourself as though God alone were before you, God in three Persons, and besides Him no one else. Represent to yourself that God is in the world as the soul is in the body, though He is infinitely higher than the world, and is not limited by it. Your body is small, and it is wholly penetrated by your small soul; the world is large, but God is infinitely great, and fills everything throughout the whole of creation—"Who is everywhere present, and filleth all things."[3]

What is the meaning of the appearance of the three strangers to Abraham? It means that the Lord, in three Persons, as though continually, travels over the earth, and watches over everything that is done on it; and that He Himself comes to those of His servants who are watchful and attentive to themselves and their salvation, and who seek Him, staying with them and conversing with them as with His friends ("We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him"[4]); whilst He sends fire upon the ungodly, as He did upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Lord is so merciful that He never disdains our prayer, but mercifully accepts it and corrects its imperfection, provided only that we turn to Him sincerely and do not entirely forget Him.

[1] Psalm x. 11, 14.
[2] Psalm xiv. 1.
[3] Prayer to the Holy Ghost.
[4] St. John xiv. 23.

We preachers have only to assist the action of God upon the hearts of men, to seize their inclination for repentance and to strengthen it.

The word of God is the same as God Himself; therefore undoubtingly believe every word of the Lord. The word of God is deed, and your own word should be deed; therefore, also, during prayer our words ought to be deed and truth, and not falsehood, hypocrisy, and flattery. Apply this to your whole life.

Great is the dignity of man as the image of God. Why is a man who possesses lively faith capable of working all kinds of miracles, and of being in some respects a god for nature? Because he is the image of God; because, through faith, he is one spirit with the Lord. Why did God send His Son to be the Saviour of the world, and deliver Him unto death for the sins of men? Because men are the image of God. Why are such unspeakable promises and blessings given unto men, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him"[1]? All because they are the image of God. What respect we ought to have for men! What hope Christians ought to have! Friends of my God! "Set your affection on things above"[2]!

"The Lord turned and looked upon Peter . . . and Peter went out, and wept bitterly."[3] And even now, when the Lord looks upon us we weep bitterly over our sins. Yes, our tears during prayer mean that the Lord has looked upon us with His gaze, that gives life to everything and trieth the hearts and reins. Ah! the soul is sometimes entangled and ensnared by sins, like a bird in the net! We do not sometimes see any outlet from our sins, and they torment us; the heart sometimes feels terribly anxious and sorrowful on account of them; but "Jesus looks upon us, and streams of tears flow from our eyes, and with the tears all the tissue of evil in our soul vanishes; we weep and rejoice that such mercy has been suddenly and unexpectedly sent to us; what warmth we then feel in our heart, and what lightness, as though we could fly up to the Lord God Himself! I thank the Lord with all my heart for freely forgiving all my sin![4]

Jesus Christ, when distributing food, first looked up to heaven, gave thanks, blessed it, and only afterwards broke the

[1] 1 Corinthians ii. 9.
[2] Colossians iii. 2.
[3] St. Luke xxii. 61, 62.
[4] Psalm ciii. 3.

bread and distributed it. The Apostle Paul did the same on board ship. So ought we also to thank God for our food and drink, as well as for all material blessings, but especially for all spiritual ones.

The Holy Ghost is the Treasury of all blessings or of spiritual riches. Look, with what wonderful riches the souls in which the Holy Ghost dwelt were endowed, with what light of knowledge, with what fragrance of virtues! The soul of a righteous man is a most rich spiritual treasury; such were, for instance, the souls of the Apostles Paul, Peter, John; of the prelates St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good."[1] This is where the true treasure is. It is not what the world values.

If you wish to contemplate Christian hope in all its grandeur, read the Church prayers, follow closely the Christian Divine services, especially the Sunday and festival ones. There you will find the infinite riches of blessings promised to believers.

The spiritual man is absorbed both with mind and heart in the contemplation of God, and finds in Him a treasure of knowledge and wisdom, of "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,"[2] whilst the carnal man is engrossed in the adulterous and sinful world, or in material nature, not seeing God in it, and seeking in it food for his earthly, short-sighted intellect, for his self-love and pride. But "Blessed are the pure in heart."[3] Cleanse your heart, and hope for union with God in the life everlasting.

When praying, strive, above all things, after fervour of spirit, after fervent, sincere repentence for your sins.—Ananias, Azarias, and Mishael, the prophet Daniel (before the appearance of the Archangel), the wise thief.

A priest is the servant of God, invested with His authority and power (in the sacrament of penitence); the blessing of the priest is the power of the Cross.

With sincere Christians prayer is continual, because we continually sin; gratitude is perpetual, because every day, every moment we receive fresh mercies from God, besides the old mercies which are numberless. Praise is also perpetual, because we perpetually see the glory of our God's works in ourselves and in the world, especially the glory of His infinite love to us.

[1] St. Luke vi. 45. [2] Romans xiv. 17. [3] St. Matthew v. 8.

The Lord is with us in the most sorrowful, inconsolable moments ("I am with him in trouble"[1]), whilst we think that it is not so, that God has forsaken us. O, what unspeakable power our God has over our hearts! Even our mothers cannot entirely draw our hearts to their love, but the Lord draws them to Him by means of the Holy Mysteries and prayer.

There is a hope of reward for good deeds: "Great is your reward in heaven.[2] . . . Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap.[3] . . . Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.[4] . . . Let Thy merciful kindness, O Lord, be upon us; like as we do put our trust in Thee."[5]

Respect yourself as the image of God; remember that this image is a spiritual one, and be zealous after the fulfilment of God's commandments, which re-establish God's likeness in you. Be most careful not to break the least of God's commandments; such a violation would destroy your likeness to God, and would bring you near to the likeness of the Devil. The more you transgress God's commandments, the more you will grow like unto the Devil.

Learn to subdue your heart, to stifle your passions, by the power of the name of the Lord, and by your own will, at the time when you chiefly suffer from the outburst of self-love, when you feel ready to strike everyone and break everything.

I have a Teacher, Who gives me life; every word of His is the word of life, and is, therefore, truth. I believe Him in everything, and all that is contrary to His word—either in my thoughts and heart, or in what I hear from other people—I do not believe, and look upon as falsehood and death to my soul.

The most holy Spirit, by the grace of the Father, gives life to the entire and earthly creation.

We see that everything material perishes, beginning with food and clothing; we also notice that sins corrupt both the soul and body. This ought to revive in us the hope of the incorruptible and unchangeable. You who feed yourself on dainties; you who are vain of dress, houses, riches—what are you doing? You are playing with soap-bubbles.

Everything that breathes, breathes by air and cannot live

[1] Psalm xci. 15. [2] St. Matthew v. 12. [3] Galatians vi. 9.
[4] 2 Timothy iv. 8. [5] Psalm xxxiii. 22.

without air; similarly all reasonable free creatures live by the Holy Ghost, as though by air, and cannot live without Him. "Every soul is quickened by the Holy Ghost."[1] Recognise that the Holy Ghost stands in the same relation to your soul as air stands in relation to your body.

During the night our soul is free from worldly vanities, and therefore the spiritual world can act upon it more freely, and it is free to receive spiritual impressions; so that if the man is a righteous one, his thoughts and the inclinations of his heart are the thoughts and inclinations of the Lord Himself, or of the Angels and Saints; whilst if he is an unrepentant sinner, they are the thoughts and inclinations of the Devil himself.

The wonder-working image of the Saviour is the Lord Himself depicted upon it. I weep bitterly, and as though involuntarily, by the grace abundantly poured upon me from it; I shed streams of tears, which cleanse my soul from sins, and bring peace and joy into my heart.

The Devil is in the habit of attacking us when we are in straitened circumstances.

If any thought is life to the heart, then it is truth; if, on the contrary, it is anguish and death to the heart, then it is a lie. Our Lord is peace and life, and He dwells in our hearts by peace and life.

Ought not the Christian who looks for eternal peace and joy in heaven to courageously and joyfully bear all sorrows, labour, sicknesses and injustices, all sufferings, all unpleasantnesses? In truth he ought. Otherwise, what would be the meaning of future rest and peace? What peace and rest shall there be for him who has already had peace and rest here, without enduring anything? Where would God's justice be? "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."[2]

The character of our earthly life is constant expectation of God's call from this life to the other. We are not our own; we are the servants of God, as the Church so rightly calls us; and servants ought to hourly await their Lord's call. He will knock, and you must go; "that they may open unto him immediately."[3] But meanwhile how do we live? We have entirely forgotten that we are the servants of God; we think that we belong to ourselves, and order our lives not in accordance with God's commandments, but in accordance with our own will; we

[1] Antiphon at Matins. [2] Acts xiv. 22. [3] St. Luke xii. 36.

live as we like. And it is owing to this that our life is full of numberless sins. Look upon human life, and you will see that it is full of "vanity of vanities; all is vanity:"[1] fashions, theatres, card-playing, dancing parties, masquerades, luxurious furniture, pictures, and so on. Everything for ourselves and nothing for our neighbour; he may go naked, or die from hunger and cold.

Contempt for creation touches the Creator; therefore do not dare to speak the following words or any similar to them, "I dislike that man's face, though he may, perhaps, be a good man;" for this is diabolical hatred of God's creature and odiousness. Remember that every man is an image of God, and that all his glory is within him, in his heart. Man looks upon the face, whilst God looks upon the heart.

Call to remembrance oftener that the evil lies in yourself and not in other people. By such a conviction, which is a perfectly true one, you will protect yourself from many sins and passions. Our greatest misfortune lies in the fact that we ascribe our own evil to another.

God's saints are great merchants, who have enriched themselves with all spiritual treasures, with all virtues: meekness, humility, abstinence, patience, great faith, hope, and love. This is why we ask their holy prayers, as poor men of rich, that they may help us in our spiritual poverty; that they may teach us how to pray and to progress in all Christian virtues; that they, having boldness before God, may pray for the remission of our past sins and protect us from fresh ones. We go to earthly merchants in their shops to buy their merchandise: shall we not have recourse to the heavenly merchants with fervent prayer, as though with silver and gold? Shall we not purchase of them their intercession for us before God for the forgiveness of sins and the bestowal of various Christian virtues? It seems very natural to do so.

Why should we thank God and good, charitable persons for everything? Chiefly for our own profit, in order that the feelings of our soul should be more tender and finer; to cultivate the feeling of our dependence in all things from God and good men, and of grateful love towards them, as well as the feeling of our own nothingness without God and of our own impotency to live without the help of kind people.

When reprimanding your subordinates for their faults, care

[1] Ecclesiastes i. 2.

fully restrain yourself from anger, irritation, and disturbance, and be gentle, full of love, dignified and quiet. If the subordinate you have to correct takes offence, gently observe to him that you have no intention of offending and irritating him, that you sincerely wish him well, and that he should be orderly in his work, and that it is not him that you are annoyed with, but the disorder that he occasions. Do not offend his pride and dignity by exalting yourself in his eyes and lowering him. If you have this weakness (pride) yourself, better leave the correction of another and first cure yourself: "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."[1] In the opposite case you will only irritate your brother, and not do him any moral good. Be gentle and indulgent to others when you hear of their faults, remembering that you, too, have similar or greater faults. You reprove another, for instance, for drunkenness; but if you drink yourself, or even if you do not drink, but indulge yourself with dainties, are given to gluttony, surfeiting, then you sin as much as he does. Correct yourself of your gluttony, and then you will be able to speak strongly against drunkenness in others. You accuse another of negligence in his service, but perhaps you yourself are also negligent. "Physician, heal thyself."[2]

Do not bear malice in your heart against anyone on account of anything; do not despise anyone for any reason. "Have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."[3]

If you meet with inattention or even disdain from strangers, do not be hurt or take offence at it, but say to yourself: "I am worthy of this. Glory to Thee, my Lord, that Thou hast granted unto me, an unworthy one, to receive dishonour from men like unto myself!" On your part always show love to all, especially to your relations, sincerely, zealously, heartily, loudly; not coldly and languidly, hypocritically, reluctantly, as if in a whisper.

Do not eat to satiety, do not sleep to excess; labour zealously, pray with your whole heart; be entirely obedient to your parents and superiors; wish everyone well, be satisfied with all, and you will be satisfied with yourself, healthy and happy.

The life of a Christian should be continual watchfulness over himself—that is, over his heart, because the invisible enemies are ready to devour us at every moment; every moment they boil with rage against us.

[1] St. Matthew vii. 5. [2] St. Luke iv. 23. [3] 1 Peter iv. 8.

You who during this present life so avoid sufferings for your body and sorrows for your soul; you who so cherish your flesh and make happy your soul—why do you not strive to avoid the eternal fire that is a thousand times more terrible than the earthly element of fire? Why do you not strive to avoid eternal sorrows? Poor creatures, turn and be converted. Truly, that fire will be unbearable.

Is it only for the adornment of your dwelling, as a beautiful piece of furniture, as an ornament, that you hang up richly-painted icons in your house, without turning to them with the hearty faith, love, and reverence due to holy things? Ask your heart if it is so. Icons in houses or in the temple are not intended for show, but for prayer before them, for reverence, for instruction. The images of the saints ought to be our home and Church teachers. Read their lives, and engrave them upon your heart, and endeavour to bring your life into conformity with theirs.

"Thou shalt love Thy neighbour as thyself."[1] We ought to have all things in common. As the sun, the air, fire, water and earth are common to us all, so ought also (in part) food and drink, money, books, and (in general) all the Lord's gifts to be shared in common; for they are given in common to all, and yet are easily divisible for distribution amongst many. For we have nothing of our own, but everything belongs to God. And it is not just for the rich to keep their superfluity in their treasuries when there are so many poor people in need of the means of existence, of necessary clothing and dwellings. However, it is just that the laborious should enjoy abundance, and that the idle should endure poverty and misery. Therefore, if we know that some are poor only through their own idleness and laziness, with such we are not obliged to share the abundance earned by our labour. "If any would not work," says the Apostle Paul, "neither should he eat."[2] But the crying poverty arising from old age, exhaustion, from sickness, from fruitless and badly-paid labour, from really difficult conditions of life, from a numerous family, from bad harvests, we must always hasten to help, especially those of us who are rich. We must be guided by the history of the times of the Apostles, by the example of the early Church.

With the words in your heart "All things are possible to him that believeth,"[3] strive after everything good and praiseworthy. Whatever good work you have the intention of doing, always have faith. Preserve by every means simplicity of heart, simplicity of faith, hope and love, of meekness, humility and

[1] St. Mark xii. 31. [2] 2 Thessalonians iii. 10. [3] St. Mark ix. 23.

gentleness. Every good comes from God, and God is every good for us. This is the simplicity of faith, hope, and love.

We ought to lay down our lives for the Lord and our neighbour, and not spare them; but meanwhile we grudge even food, drink, clothing, dwelling, money, books, and other things—this earthly dross. Our crafty and evil flesh seeks after the smallest pretext for self-love, greediness, and even grasping.

What a beautiful, tranquillising, and safe thing it is to forgive the sins of those who trespass against us or offend us! As soon as we forgive we feel at peace. You were offended? What of it? It is right that your old carnal man should be afflicted—he who is self-loving, proud, irritable, envious, lazy, avaricious, and who so greatly offends God. It is well that it should be measured to him, even a little, as he measures unto God.

It is not the sun that shines, it is the Lord Who shines, by His incomparable goodness, His unspeakable light. If He has given so much light to the sun, then certainly He Himself has infinitely more; if He has given so much light to the sun, then in the life to come He will certainly give incomparably more light to the righteous, and this sun is nothing in comparison to the reasonable human soul. Thus, if the material, created light shines so dazzlingly, then how will the primary, true, uncreated Light—God Himself—shine? There is an analogy between the material world (beginning with the sun, down to the smallest blade of grass) and the spiritual world.

When your brother sins against you in any way—for instance, if he speaks ill of you, or transmits with an evil intention your words in a perverted form to another, or calumniates you—do not be angered against him, but seek to find in him those good qualities which undoubtedly exist in every man, and dwell lovingly on them, despising his evil calumnies concerning you as dross, not worth attention, as an illusion of the Devil. The gold-diggers do not pay attention to the quantity of sand and dirt in the gold-dust, but only look for the grains of gold; and though they are but few, they value this small quantity, and wash it out of heaps of useless sand. God acts in a like manner with us, cleansing us with great and long forbearance.

"He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin," is said of Christ, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."[1] Will you be ashamed after this to acknowledge any of your sins, whatever they may be, or to take upon yourself

[1] 2 Corinthians v. 21.

the blame for sin which you have not committed? If the Son of God Himself was made guilty of sin, though He was sinless, then you, too, must accept blame for all sins with meekness and love (for you are really sinful of all sins), and accept blame humbly and submissively, even for those sins of which you are not guilty.

Be bold, resolute in every good work, be especially generous in words of kindness, tenderness, sympathy, and still more so in works of compassion and mutual help. Consider despondency, despair in any good work, as an illusion. Say: "I can do all things through Christ Which strengtheneth me,"[1] though indeed I am the greatest of sinners. "All things are possible to him that believeth."[2]

It is necessary that the following words should be indelibly engraved upon our hearts, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,"[3] and that these words should guide our heart upon meeting with anyone, at any time, whether he comes to us or we go to him; whether we have to do some work for him, or to give him anything, or simply to converse with him. Thus bear in your heart the words "love him as thyself," and carry on a perpetual mental war for the observance of these living words of our Lord. Force yourself to mutual love; intentionally trouble and disturb the worm of self-love and evil concealed within you; crucify it, and conquer it "by the power of the might"[4] of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When you pray for the repose of the soul of the departed, force yourself to pray with your whole heart, remembering that to do so is your essential duty, and not only that of a priest or ecclesiastic. Represent to yourself how necessary repose is to the departed one, and how greatly he (or she) needs the prayers for him (or her) of the living, being a member of the one body of the Church; how the demons are contesting his (or her) soul from the angels, and how it trembles, not knowing what its eternal destiny will be. Our prayer of faith and love for the departed means much in the Lord's sight. Represent to yourself, further, how necessary rest is for you when you are bound by the fetters of sin, and how fervently, with what sincerity, ardour, and power you then pray to the Lord and to the Most-pure Mother of the Lord, and how you rejoice and triumph when, after your fervent prayer, you obtain the remission of your sins and peace of heart. Apply all this to the soul of the departed. His (or her) soul also needs prayer—your prayer now—because it cannot pray fruitfully

[1] Philippians iv. 13.
[2] St. Mark ix. 23.
[3] St. Mark xii. 31.
[4] Ephesians vi. 10.

any longer itself; the soul of the departed also requires the rest which you can implore for it by means of your ardent prayer, joined to works of charity for the benefit of that soul, and especially by the offering of the bloodless sacrifice on its behalf.

Drunkards, adulterers, gluttons, thieves, disturbers, idlers, card-players, theatre-goers, dancers, idle speakers, scoffers! tell me: for what purpose was it that the Son of God came down from heaven, preached the Gospel of the kingdom, worked innumerable miracles, suffered on the cross, died and rose from the dead, and sent the Apostles into the world to preach the kingdom? Tell me, for what purpose was all this done? Was it that you should satiate yourself, get drunk, commit adultery, thieve, bear false witness, spend your time in idleness, in idle speaking, card-playing, in theatres, dancing, and gossip? O, how dearly will you pay for your unevangelical life if you do not repent and amend!

God's priests ought to be especially skilful in the art of overcoming evil with good, for they rest in the law of God and are acquainted with numberless examples of the goodness of God's saints—of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, David, Moses, Samuel, and especially of the God-man, Jesus Christ Himself, Who is our purest image; the Apostles Peter, Paul, James, John, and others; the proto-martyr and first deacon Stephen, and others; besides which, they are often strengthened in the Sacrament of Holy Communion by the very Source of goodness, our Lord Jesus Christ—and teach others how "to overcome evil with good."[1] From a priest, if he has not learned to be meek, humble, and kind, and to overcome evil with good, a stricter account will be required than from a layman; for the priest is raised up to heaven by God's sacraments, and has received great powers for piety. If, under these circumstances, he does not live piously, he dooms himself to eternal fire through his impenitence, negligence, and incorrigibleness. My Lord, forgive me my sins, and teach me to do Thy will. Priests ought not to be over-indulgent to sins and passions where it is necessary to uproot passions and bad habits. They must act boldly and firmly, without fearing the malice of others, and entirely despising it; although even on such occasions their actions should bear the character of gentleness and love, and of a sincere desire for their brother's amendment. If nothing takes effect upon him, then they must not heed his anger and ill-humour, but do their duty with firmness, without being disturbed by outbursts of malice. Peace is evil with sinners who put a bad construction

[1] Romans xii. 21.

upon every kind observation, every request, who only wish to see an aggression of malice in everything. Not being able to see the light themselves, they think others are blind too; being evil themselves, they do not wish to see any good in others.

When anyone, out of kindness, praises you to others, and they transmit these praises to you, do not consider them as a just tribute of esteem really due to you, but ascribe them solely to the kindness of heart of the person who thus spoke of you, and pray to God for him, that God may strengthen him in his kindness of heart and in every virtue; but acknowledge yourself to be the greatest of sinners, not out of humility, but truthfully, actually, knowing as you do your evil deeds.

May the infinite love and mercy of the Lord triumph, in consequence of our sincere recognition and confession of our sins; and may the sinful flattery of the Devil, teaching us to conceal our sins and not to acknowledge them, be covered with shame! May all the snares and bonds of the Devil be torn asunder by our repentance, like a cobweb! The Devil seeks that we should conceal our sins, and thus give ourselves up to them in secret still more and more easily; but let us even here destroy his snares and wiles; let us confess our sins, in order that we ourselves and all others may see to what abomination we are giving ourselves up or have given ourselves up, and that thus, by recognising this abomination, we may more easily amend. "Tell," it is said, "all thine iniquities," and do not be silent about them, "that thou mayest be justified."

Say: "I have nothing of my own; all is God's." "Your own" is an illusion of your sinful flesh. "All things are common." Such ought to be the words of the regenerate man. "Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."[1] My Lord! it belongs to Thee to give me this also.

Brethren! prepare yourselves for union with God. Give up earthly vanity. Apply yourselves to the great work of self-purification and self-improvement. Love to progress in faith and virtue, and not to progress in the things of this world. Even here on earth we prepare ourselves to see there in eternity the Maker of every visible and invisible creature, the Beauty of all.

To my pupils. You are my children, for I have begotten you through the Gospel in Jesus Christ, my spiritual blood,

[1] Acts iv. 32.

for my teaching flows in your veins. I have given and give you to drink of the milk of the Word, as a mother from her breast. You are my children, and therefore you are ever in my heart, and I pray for you. You are my children because you are my spiritual children. You are my children because, as a priest, I am truly a father, and you yourselves call me father. "My children!" This word is very displeasing to the Devil, who is the cause of dislike, malice, and hypocrisy; but I, God helping me, will not even for a moment obey him, and will not call you otherwise than my children; for you are my children by faith, by the Church of God, and by the instruction and fatherly guidance you receive from me. One can only truly call others' children "my children" by the Holy Spirit, by the Spirit of truth and love.

When you are expecting powerful temptations from the enemy, arm yourself with all the armour of God, with faith, hope, and love. Keep in your heart the words "All things are possible to him that believeth,"[1] and "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."[2] Say: "I do not doubt in, and do not despair of, anything good, although you, mine enemy, endeavour to sow both doubt and despair in me in regard to everything good, and especially in regard to the highest good, love. The God of Love Himself is with me, the God Whose children we all are. I, unworthy as I am, bear the image of this very Father." "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me."[3]

To those who do not read the Gospel. Are you pure, holy, and perfect without reading the Gospel, and is it not needful for you to look in this mirror? Or is it that your soul is so deformed that you are afraid of seeing your deformity? "They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed."[4]

Do not be anxious about money; if you really need it, then God will send it to you, as He did the manna or quails to the Israelites. "The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is: the compass of the world, and they that dwell therein."[5] First seek the kingdom of God, the salvation of men, their strengthening in faith, the amendment of their lives; strengthen yourself in faith, cleanse your heart, conscientiously fulfil your calling, carefully perform your duties, and everything else, such as money, food, clothing, etc., shall be added to you.

[1] St. Mark ix. 23. [2] Romans xv. 13. [3] St. John xvii. 6, 9.
[4] Psalm xxxiv. 5. [5] Psalm xxiv. 1.

O Holy Trinity, our God! incomplex Being, Who hath created our soul also after Thine image, grant that we may have life and peace in Thee! O Holy Trinity, our Nourisher and Hope! grant that we may ever put our trust in Thee alone, and ever find life and peace in Thee alone! Thou carriest us all, like a mother, in Thine arms, and feedest us all from Thy hands, like the most tender mother! Thou never forgettest us, and wilt never forget us, for Thou Thyself hast said: "Can a woman forget her sucking child? . . . . yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee;"[1] that is, "I will not cease to feed, preserve, protect, deliver, and save thee." Also Thou Thyself hast said: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."[2] Why, then, are we anxious about our food? Why are we so greedy? Why do we surfeit and delight ourselves with dainties? Why do we grudge to share with our neighbour? O impiety! O blindness! O filthy self-love! O want of love for God and our neighbour! For God dwells in the person of our neighbour, and therefore we grudge His own gifts to God Himself. Remember how generously the spirit-bearing Prophet Elisha rewarded the Shunamite woman who received him in her house and entertained him in the simplicity of her heart! He implored God to give her a son, and afterwards, when this son died, he raised him from the dead.

Vain is our life—that is, vainly and for nothing, uselessly, to no purpose are the days of our lives, lost for eternity; we only care about earthly, worldly things, and think but little of eternity. We do not represent to ourselves the future terrible judgment, future torment, and future endless bliss. We all live in a kind of spiritual mist; the flesh and passions have overpowered us, whilst the spirit is oppressed, crushed, stifled. But "behold! the Bridegroom" of our souls "cometh in the middle of the night, and blessed is that servant whom He shall find watchful; but unworthy is he whom He shall find cast down" by worldly cares. "Beware then, my soul, lest thou be weighed down by sleep, lest thou be given over to death, and be shut out from the kingdom; but arise, and cry: 'Holy, holy, holy, art Thou, O God! Through the Mother of God have mercy upon us.'"[3]

Believe that the prayer even of one friend of God, especially a priest of God, who lives a holy life, can work wonders upon a considerable part of nature, as the prayers of the prophets Moses, Elijah, and others. Therefore, live in a manner pleasing to God, especially you who are priests of God; be holy, pure,

[1] Isaiah xlix. 15. [2] Hebrews xiii. 5.
[3] Troparion at Matins in Passion Week.

meek, humble, merciful, temperate, laborious, patient, and your prayer shall always penetrate the heavens, and shall be heard and fulfilled. Always pray with your whole heart, and, above all, with a pure heart. "There was given unto the angel much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."[1] And to you also this incense is given. The censer with the incense ought always to remind you of this—that is, of how easily your prayer for yourself, and "for the errors of the people"[2] and their iniquities, ascends to God and is accepted by Him.

You glorify God by your words, but you do not glorify Him by your deeds. Glorify God above all by your deeds, by temperance, laboriousness, love, mercy, humility, and patience. Do not doubt in any truth: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"[3] Woe unto us for our doubt and presumption!

The sacrament of unction with holy oil is spiritual honey, life-giving drink. What a wealth of hope! What prayers! It is an abstract of the whole Gospel.

How little men really require, and how abundantly the Lord bestows His gifts upon us in order that we may supply our brethren with food and drink! We only give away a ladleful from the river, and even this is God's and not ours. And yet we are avaricious, stingy; we grudge every penny, and grow anxious, as though we were threatened with the loss of our life itself. O, how wanting Christians are! O, vain, blind trust in food and drink! O, wiles of the flesh! O, want of Christian simplicity!

"He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him."[4] As an infant carried in its mother's bosom lives wholly by her, so also the Christian communicating of the Body and Blood of Christ dwells in Christ, like an infant in its mother's bosom, and lives wholly by Christ. "As I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."[5] In what, then, do you trust besides your Christ, communicant of God's Mysteries, and especially you who are a priest? To what do you cleave? In what do you seek your life? Is it in money, which made Judas hang himself? Is it in food and drink? But your incorruptible food is the Body of Christ, of which you so often partake. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and

[1] Revelation viii. 3, 4. [2] Hebrews ix. 7. [3] St. Matthew xiv. 31.
[4] St. John vi. 56. [5] St. John vi. 57.

there is none on earth that I desire in comparison of Thee . . . God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."[1]

The malice of the enemy. The more piously a man lives, the more the Devil forces men to anger against him, as was the case with Saul against the pious David. The more holy a person is, the more such an one is blasphemed, as, for instance, the Holy Virgin, Who is more honourable than the cherubim, and incomparably more glorious than the seraphim. The Devil incites us to exalt ourselves before simple-hearted persons, and to despise the simplicity of their faith and the very objects of their faith and reverent worship.

The Word of God says, "Be not drunk with wine";[2] whilst you builders of public-houses say, "Get drunk with wine," and have built thousands of public-houses to tempt your brethren. And yet you go to church and pray in your homes. "They flatter with their tongues. Destroy Thou them, O God; let them perish through their own imaginations; cast them out in the multitude of their ungodliness; for they have rebelled against Thee."[3]

The Lord is everything good for me and in me; I myself am a moral nothingness and chiefly evil, as my Lord says: "Without Me ye can do nothing."[4] This the Lord says even to every saint. But if the Lord is every good for me and in me, then He is the same also in relation to the saints, for they are also men like unto me. For instance, the saints pray for us by the grace bestowed upon them by God (Revelation v. 8; viii. 3, 4). Had the Lord not given them grace to pray for us, they could not have done so.

Undoubting faith, undoubting hope, undoubting love. Implant these words in your heart, and show them in your life.

In this world be one with others in mutual love and service; then not only the angels and saints will be one with you, but even God Himself, here, and still more there in the future world, when God shall "be all in all."[5] Strive, man, by every means to attain to such union, avoiding any spiritual separation through self-love, pride, envy, covetousness, doubt, and little faith—that they "all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us."[6] Union is God; separation is the Devil. The separation of the Churches was the work of the Devil; heresies, dissent, are the work of the Devil.

[1] Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26. [2] Ephesians v. 18. [3] Psalm v. 10.
[4] St. John xv. 5. [5] 1 Corinthians xv. 28. [6] St. John xvii. 21.

If you greedily eat and drink much, then you will be flesh; whilst if you fast and pray, then you will be spirit. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit."[1] Fast and pray, and you shall accomplish great things. The satiated man is incapable of great works. Have simplicity of faith, and you shall accomplish great things; "for all things are possible to him that believeth."[2] Be watchful and zealous, and you shall do great things.

If "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,"[3] then what a joyful time for God's good angels our great Lent must be, and particularly the days of penitence and communion—the Fridays and Saturdays! And how greatly priests contribute to this their joy by carefully, paternally confessing their spiritual children! But, on the other hand, there is no more grievous time for the demons than the season of Lent; and therefore they rage more furiously and attack priests, who help God's people to sincerely repent of their sins, with special cruelty, and are especially powerful, both in church and at home, in chilling the hearts of the pious Christians who are zealous in prayer, fasting, and penitence. What pious priest and layman does not know of the demoniacal fury attacking them even during the very performance of the sacrament of penitence? The least negligence on the part of the confessing priest, the smallest unrighteous movement of the heart, and the devils enter into the heart of the priest with all their demoniacal ferocity, and torment him for a long, long while, if he does not immediately drive out these uninvited guests by the most fervent prayer of repentance and lively faith.

Moses' fast was for the intemperance of the Israelites. The sufferings of the saints were for our effeminacy; their fasts and privations for our intemperance and luxury; their fervent prayers are for us who are so slothful in prayer. The fast of our Lord Jesus Christ was for our intemperance. His hands were stretched out on the cross for our hands stretched out towards the forbidden tree and to everything forbidden by the commandments of God. Our prayers are imputed to others for the justification of those for whom we pray, also our exploits and virtues on behalf of others, as, for instance, our prayers for the departed and living and our alms to the poor. Thus the prayers and tears of the mother of Augustine for her son saved Augustine.

At confession do not spare yourself, do not hurry, do not grow agitated and angry with your spiritual children who come to

[1] Ephesians v. 18; 1 Thessalonians v. 6-8.
[2] St. Mark ix. 23.
[3] St. Luke xv. 7, 10.

you. Say to yourself: "It is my pleasure to confess my spiritual children in detail; they are the sheep of my Lord. I thus offer the most pleasing sacrifice to my Lord, Who laid down His own life for us, and afford great profit to my spiritual children themselves, as well as to myself, by willingly fulfilling my important duty, and thus obtain peace of conscience."

Why did not the Almighty create the world at once, but in six days? In order to teach man, by deeds, to perform his work gradually, not hurriedly, but with consideration. If you pray, pray without hurrying; if you read the Gospel or, in general, any religious or worldly books, do not read them hurriedly, but read with consideration and with a true view of the matter. If you are learning a lesson, do not hurry to finish it quickly, but penetrate into the subject deeply and consider it well. If you are doing any other work, do it without hurrying, with consideration, quietly. Even the world was not created instantaneously, but in six days. The Lord shows us an example in everything; let us follow in His steps.

The characteristics of the men of the second half of the present nineteenth century are:—self-worship, self-government (autonomy), materialism in life, and spiritual scepticism (incredulity).

I promised you the angelic life, Abraham's bosom, to shine forth like the sun, but you have set at nought My promises, the words of My mouth, in which there was never any falsehood.

Why is it that "Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment"?[1] Because every idle word brings harm both to the soul of the man who speaks idly and to those who listen to such idle speaking; for it withdraws them from God the Word, Who is incomplex. This is why, during Lent, we ask the Lord that our hearing may not be tempted by idle speaking: "Give me not the spirit of vain speaking."[2]

Bear with humble submission to the will of God every sorrow, every sickness and infirmity, every labour, every offence and disappointment, saying: "Thy Will be done,"[3] knowing that God's mercy orders everything for your good, and that the Lord can easily change every disappointment into happiness and joy.

[1] St. Matthew xii. 36. [2] Prayer of St. Ephraem the Syrian.
[3] St. Matthew vi. 10; St. Luke xi. 2.

Health and the belly, these are the two idols—especially with men of the present age, of whom I myself, a great sinner, am one—for which we live, and which we continually serve, even to the neglect of the duties of our Christian calling—for instance, to the neglect of the reading of the Word of God, which is sweeter than honey and honey-comb; to the neglect of prayer, that sweetest converse with God, and of the preaching of the Word of God. To walk a great deal for health, and to incite the appetite, to eat with appetite—such are the objects of the desires and aspirations of many of us. But through our frequent walks, through our fondness for food and drink, we shall find that one thing has been neglected, and another irrevocably missed, whilst others have not even entered into our minds; for can the time after a good dinner or supper be really a good time for any serious work? Even if we would like to occupy ourselves with work, the belly, full of food and drink, draws us away from it, and constrains us to rest, so that we begin to slumber over our work. What sort of work can it be? Indeed, there is nothing left, if it is after dinner, but to lie down and rest, and if it is after supper, after having prayed somehow or other (for a satiated man cannot even pray as he should), to go to bed and sleep—the miserable consequence of an overloaded stomach—until the next morning. And in the morning there is another sacrifice to your belly ready in the shape of a dainty breakfast. You get up, pray, of course not with your whole heart—since with our whole heart we can only eat and drink, walk, read novels, go to theatres, dance at evening parties, dress elegantly—and thus you pray, out of habit, carelessly, to save appearances, only as a form, without the essence of the prayer, without lively faith, without power, without any fervour in your petitions, praises, and thanks to the Lord God for His uncountable mercies, and then you hurry again to food and drink. At last, when you have eaten and drunk so much that now, scarcely able to move, you are ready to begin work, if it really is work, and not rather inactivity—such, for instance, as trading with some worldly vanities, accompanied by an abundance of swearing, lying, and cheating. In such or a similar way, with many and many of us, our present life passes away, and our days consume in vanity,[1] whilst we care little for that which is the most important matter on earth—the salvation of our soul. Thus our life is spent mainly in the worship of two brittle idols—health and the belly—and then dress; so much so that many, by worshipping fashion, sacrifice even their health and food, thus going to the other extreme. Furthermore, people worship money, this great god, the Jupiter of our age; for the sake of

[1] Psalm lxxviii. 33.

this idol many sacrifice their health, spending sleepless nights for its sake, swearing falsely for it, violating the laws of friendship for it, becoming cold to their relatives through it, all with the one purpose of accumulating as much money as they possibly can. There are money-lovers who, if it were possible, would turn everything into money, and would live by it, like Judas Iscariot, who wished to turn into money even the precious ointment with which the pious woman who loved her Lord with her whole soul anointed His feet, and then wiped them with her hair. Christian! it is not for your health, belly, dress, and money that you must care; you must strive after love for God and your neighbour, for these are God's two greatest commandments. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."[1]

"All things are possible to him that believeth," because he who believes is one spirit with the Lord. If everything is possible to the believer who lives on earth, though he is not quite perfect, then still more is it so to him who dwells in heaven in close union with God, and who is most perfect. To the saints God is everything, so that the saints are truly gods. "I [God Himself, Whose word is truth] have said: Ye are gods."[2]

Watch every movement of your heart; consider whether it is pleasing to the Holy Trinity, or if it is not, on the contrary, the will of your old passionate man.

The work of the Lord's hands—the visible and invisible world—testifies to the existence of the Lord, of His wisdom, mercy, omnipotence. This is why we often hear sung in church the words: "O, all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord."[3] How, then, can some deny the Lord, not seeing Him in His works?

Believe and always steadfastly remember that in whatever place you appear with the Lord's cross—either at a thanksgiving service or upon any other occasion—it always sanctifies the air and all who touch it.

Believe also that during the time of all prayers, thanksgivings, church services, and above all during the Liturgy, the Lord most speedily bestows His blessings in accordance with your prayer, or that of other priests, upon all those who pray sincerely, and pardons them by His Divine Royal mercy. If ye then "being evil know how to give good things unto your children, how much

[1] 1 John iv. 16. [2] Psalm lxxxii. 6.
[3] Song of the Three Holy Children (Daniel iii. 35).

more shall your Father, which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask Him."[1]

The priests praying on earth for men are the sign and testimony of the heavenly Church praying for us in Heaven, and of the Mediator Christ God Himself. The Saints are kinder than we think, and more speedily than we think they come to our help, in accordance with our prayer.

Unwillingly, faint-heartedly, with murmurings and blasphemy against the Lord, we bear the cruel afflictions of our heart, not seeing the profit which should be derived from patiently and submissively bearing them. We do not wish to see that our heart has waxed gross and has become infected by various passions; that it is proud, adulterous, malicious, and cunning, and cleaves to earthly things; and that it cannot be cleansed and made humble, and become good and submissive to God otherwise than by cruel fiery afflictions and great oppression.

Strengthen me, my God; fortify me, my God; help me, my God! "Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord; O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity."[2]

You care for the opinion of men, for human glory; set yourself actively to heal this infirmity of your heart. Think and be anxious only for the glory of God. Consider human dishonour as nothing. When you ought to honour a poor or uneducated and rough father, or mother, or relation, or friend, or acquaintance before distinguished and educated men of this world, or to defend any truth in an assembly that scoffs at it, then have in view God alone and His commandments, also your parents, or the relation, friend, or acquaintance, and God's truth, and be steadfast in your respect for them, without cowardice and shame, without being in the least shamed by those present or by your questioners.

Concerning trust in God's providence. "Can a woman" (a mother) "forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee,"[3] says the Lord. And who could be more tender and careful than a mother of her children? What woman will forget to feed the children of her womb? But let us even admit that mothers who forsake their children may be found; "But I," says the Lord, "am not like such carnal mothers, and will not forget nor forsake you." What trust, what hope, the Lord Himself inspires in us by these words, in His Providence con-

[1] St. Matthew vii. 11. [2] Psalm cxviii. 25. [3] Isaiah xlix. 15.

tinually caring for us and never forsaking any one of us! You are sometimes anxious about what you shall eat and drink, and how you shall be clothed; you greatly afflict your heart if you part grudgingly, sorrowfully with your money, when it is necessary to give to another, although you have plenty left, and you thus show that you put your trust and hope in earthly dross. But why are you anxious? Why do you cling to dross? Cling to the heavenly Father; He will not forget you, and will not forsake you. Let the dross forsake you; you will only feel easier without it; for the more money you have, the greater the quantity of this dross that adheres to your heart, the more will your heart which is not earthly be afflicted. There is a saying amongst men that money is no hindrance, however much of it we may have. This is untrue. It greatly hinders our soul from rising upwards, or from meditating upon our heavenly country, and the more we have of it the more it drags our soul down to earth, inciting us to occupy ourselves with various earthly devices, such as buildings, rich furniture in our houses, rich clothes, luxurious viands and drinks, and thus depriving our soul of holy zeal and precious time, during which it ought to be earning future bliss for itself.

The human soul dwells in its body as in a small world. As in olden time, for the iniquities spread over the earth, the Lord, from the midst of the world itself, sent punishment upon men, and the waters, which previously stood in their appointed places, came out from them and flooded the whole earth, so, likewise, for the punishment of each individual man for his sins, He sends punishment from within the man himself, commanding the streams of blood or water (hæmorrhage, dropsy) to rush out from their appointed places and to flood the little world of the human body. The Master's punishment is ready for us at every moment; our own body and soul conceal in themselves a multitude of chastisements for those who transgress the commandments of God, the Creator and Judge of all. Thus God punishes us for our sins through ourselves; to chastisements of this kind afflictions and sicknesses also belong. "Wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished."[1]

When you pray to the Lord, look with your spiritual eyes into yourself, into your soul. The Lord is there, in your thoughts, and in the right movements of your heart, as He is also outside you and in every place. "The Word" (the Lord) "is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart"[2]—that is, not in Heaven only, nor in the deep.

[1] Wisdom xi. 16. [2] Romans x. 8.

Idle talk, or amusement with trifles in the society of guests, deprives the heart of faith, of the fear of God, and of love for God. Guests are a scourge for a pious heart. Of course, it is understood that I refer to guests who only occupy themselves with trifles. Serious, religiously-minded guests are very different.

Satiety drives away faith and the fear of God from the heart. A satiated man does not feel the presence of God in his heart; heartfelt, fervent prayer is far from him.

You have built yourself a house, or renovated your rooms, with the view of living more comfortably and spaciously, cleaner, lighter, and more cheerfully; you have become rich, or at any rate, well-to-do; all the surroundings of your life are beautiful, and fill your soul with joy. It would seem that it only remains for you to live in peace and rejoice. But no; as soon as you begin to enjoy the fruits of your earthly cares, a hitherto unforeseen source of sorrow reveals itself in your soul, and this sorrow strikes you powerfully, suddenly depriving you of your peace of heart and of the comfort you so longed for. You cease to be interested in anything; nothing seems to exist for you—you feel overburdened by grievous sorrow and deadly anguish. What does this mean? What malicious, envious power falls upon us as soon as we begin to live for our own gratification? Why does our soul begin to grieve and be afflicted at the very time when, in our opinion, it should rejoice? Listen to me, disciple of Christ. You thought to live upon earth in peace and pleasure, when the earthly path must be a most sorrowful and narrow one; you thought to find tranquillity and pleasure in corruptible things and not in Christ, Who alone is the rest and eternal blessedness of our souls; and the Lord—not wishing that we should live here in peace and plenty, and thus forget the one thing needful, the salvation of our soul and our heavenly country, but desiring that we should seek our rest and blessedness in Him alone—allows the Devil, God's enemy and yours, to tempt you, to strike your soul with sorrow and affliction at the time when all your surroundings invite you to joy, comfort, and rest. You thus learn by experience that every earthly enjoyment means vanity and vexation of spirit, and that without God, in spite of all comforts tending to an outwardly happy life, we are but poor, miserable creatures; that to have Christ in our hearts is to possess a rich, beautiful, bright dwelling-place, every adornment, peace, and comfort; and thus bear your sorrow patiently, and steadfastly learn, with your whole heart, the lesson which the Lord teaches you through your affliction. Do not grow faint-hearted and do not despair in God's mercy. "A little affliction and then joy shall shine again. For

the Lord is most merciful, and remembers that we are dust, that the days of a man are as grass, that he only flourishes like the flower of the field, which when the wind goeth over it it is gone."[1] "And the Lord will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but with the temptation will give us abundance of power, so that we may be able to bear it."[2]

Believe heartily that everything that is touched by the life-giving Spirit of God, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, can be quickened and spiritualised (for instance, He can spiritualise earth, wheat, bread, wood, and stone). Thus He creates from the bread and wine the most pure Body and most pure Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever existing with the Father and the Holy Ghost. As the Spirit is single, not complex, all-perfect, He, like thought, enters into a man, or into anything He pleases, in an instant, and even more rapidly. And there is no thing or atom too small for Him: for Him both the infinitely great and the infinitely small in creation, are equally null.

During the life of the Christian there are hours of inconsolable sorrow and sickness, when it seems that the Lord has completely abandoned and forsaken him, for there is not the least feeling of God's presence in the soul. Such hours are the hours of the temptation of the faith, hope, love, and patience of the Christian. "But better times shall soon come for him, and He shall send Jesus Christ, Which before was preached unto you."[3] Soon the Lord will again rejoice him, so let him not fall under temptation.

On great festivals our envious enemy, the Devil, offends, afflicts, and casts us into extreme despondency, either by means of some bodily sickness, vexation and oppression of the spirit, or by means of his spiritual fiery arrows, or by striking us with extreme insensibility and coldness. It will soon become clear to you that the enemy was using his craft against you, and that the cause of your affliction and sickness was not a natural, gloomy state of mind.

The more the outward prosperity of a pious man increases the more furiously Satan rages against him, and fights against him by temptations (wiles), as he did against Job. Therefore, you who love God, when the prosperity of your house increases you must expect to meet with violent attacks from Satan; he will fall upon one or the other member of your family and torment him.

[1] Psalm ciii. 14, 15. [2] 1 Corinthians x. 13. [3] Acts iii. 20.

During prayer, do not allow the flesh and the enemy, acting through it, to conquer you; speak the truth from your heart, and use no deceit in your tongue.[1] Think and feel what you say in the prayer, and do not let there be honey on your tongue and ice in your heart. Once you are conquered by the enemy, you will have to defend yourself and your freedom against him, as a piece of ground already conquered by the enemy, and your heart will withdraw itself from the Lord. Do not neglect anything in the spiritual life; do not consider anything unimportant, unworthy of great attention: it is through little sins that the Devil leads us to great ones. Above all, endeavour to be always truthful in your heart. When it is most difficult to fight against the flesh, then is the time to show your firmness, then is the time not to grow weak in the conflict, but to fight like a good soldier of Christ.

When you feel in your heart that the Lord "makes as though He would go further" from your heart, from your thoughts, then constrain Him, the Merciful One, saying sincerely: "Abide with me: for it is toward evening and the day" of my spiritual life "is far spent; and He shall come in to tarry with thee"[2]; for He is merciful, and lets Himself be constrained.

Do not sit down to table with a spirit disturbed by any passion, lest the enemy turn your food and drink to your harm, and not to your health; for he uses his craft through everything, and ever seeks to injure man. Always sit down to table in peace, thanking the Lord, and the food and drink will be for your good and health, because the blessing of God will rest both on the food and on you yourself.

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it"[3]—that is, whosoever wishes to save his old, carnal, sinful man, shall lose his life: for the true life consists in crucifying and mortifying the old man, together with his deeds, and putting on "the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."[4] Without the mortification of the old, carnal man, there is no true life or eternal blessedness. The more complete and more poignant the mortification of the old man is, the more perfect will his renovation and regeneration be, the higher his cleansing, the more perfect his life, and the greater his bliss in the future world. Mortify yourself, and you shall obtain new life. Ah! I myself feel that when I am in perfect health, and do not keep under my body by labours, I

[1] Psalm xv. 2, 3.
[2] St. Luke xxiv. 28, 29.
[3] St. Matthew xvi. 25.
[4] Colossians iii. 9, 10.

die in spirit, the kingdom of God is no longer in me, and my flesh and the Devil overpower me.

Do not ascribe weakness to the omnipotent power of the Lord's cross, and still less to the holy, life-giving Mysteries of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ because of the weakness of your own heart in faith. They are ever the one same life-giving Power; for they are Christ Himself, the eternal Power, That creates everything, That keeps everything and vivifies everything. The cross is likewise always omnipotent by the power of Him Who was crucified upon it, is always life-giving for the sake of the Life That hung upon it.

Let all carnal sweetness be as bitterness to you; carnal loss, as gain; that which is precious, as cheap; that which is wholesome and nourishing, as unwholesome and not nourishing, because it can easily be unwholesome and harmful to your soul. Let your only sweetness be Christ, your one hope He That created all things from nothing.

O that we might all land happily on the shores of the heavenly country!

"They straightway left their nets and followed Him."[1] The Apostles did not grudge leaving their nets for the Lord's sake, although they were perhaps their only property, and precious to them because they lived by them; and we, likewise, for the Lord's sake, ought to leave everything that hinders our following Him—that is, all the many and various nets in which the enemy entangles us in this life. But it is but little only to leave these nets; we must follow Christ, as the Apostles left all and followed Him. And he Who wishes to follow Christ and to come there where He went must deny himself and take up his cross,[2] like Christ and the Apostles, and follow after Him, Christ our God, in accordance with His commandments, not sparing himself in great deeds for the glory of God and the salvation of his soul. Applying this Gospel story about leaving the nets to ourselves, we involuntarily represent to ourselves everything earthly, beginning with our body and ending with the last thing that occupies as a net that can easily be torn.

It is impossible not to wonder at the simple-heartedness and indifference to earthly blessings of the Galilean fishermen, and at their absolute obedience to the voice of the Lord. A few words of the Saviour were enough; they left their nets, their sole

[1] St. Matthew iv. 20.
[2] St. Matthew xvi. 24; St. Mark viii. 34; St. Luke ix. 23.

wealth, their greatest treasure, and followed Him, without reasoning why and wherefore they went. What simplicity of heart! What detachment from earthly blessings! What child-like obedience! How easy is the access of the word of the Divine Messiah to simple hearts! It is spoken—and done! There are many such simple people living in labour and low estate, but there are no such men amongst the rich. What do we see in one of them when the Lord told him to sell his possessions and follow Him? He followed not the Lord, but his riches. "He went away," it is said, "sorrowful."[1]

It is well to place candles before the icons. But it is still better if you bring as a sacrifice to God the fire of your love for Him and your neighbour. It is well that the one should be accompanied by the other. But if you place candles before the icons and have no love for God and your neighbour in your heart, if you are avaricious, if you do not live in peace with others—then your sacrifice to God is in vain.

Do not be disturbed at the malice of others, but always triumph over it by the elevation of your spirit; let it bend and fall down before you in the dust, and not you before it. Any evil is in itself a fall; whilst virtue, though it may be mocked at, always stands upon an eminence—provided it does not fall itself through being conquered by evil.

When there is any unpleasant or unhealthy odour in the air we endeavour to get away from this unhealthy part, or to somehow destroy the unhealthy elements which have entered into the pure air. Similarly when you feel in your heart anything disturbing or oppressing it, endeavour to immediately drive away the injurious element disturbing your soul—the passions, for instance—knowing that it comes from the abyss of hell. There is a great analogy between the bodily and spiritual lives, and the wise Christian possesses as cultivated and refined spiritual feelings as the carnal man bodily ones. Besides, it is absurd to cultivate bodily feelings in every way, and to leave spiritual ones neglected. The spiritual feelings or organs are concentrated in the heart. It is necessary to refine and cleanse it by every means, in order that it should turn away from the least evil odour of sins and passions, and instantly banish them from itself.

Do not be afraid of human talk and mockery about yourself. This is diabolical fear; think of what the Lord God says of you, what the angels and saints say of you.

[1] St. Matthew xix. 22.

In your relations and intercourse with men, keep in your heart the word "love," and, being attentive to it, converse with all with hearty love and goodwill. Never let this precious word out of your heart in your intercourse with men; it powerfully assists the strengthening of your heart in love. Of course it is necessary to bear this word in your heart not separately, not by itself, but together with hearty faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

You, sinner, who have fallen into the depths of evil, when you represent to yourself the multitude of your sins and fall into despair and hardness of heart, remember that the heavenly Father sent His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, into the world for your salvation from sins and from eternal condemnation for them. Turn then with faith to this Mediator before God for men, imploring Him from the depths of your soul to wash away by His all-cleansing Blood, shed for us on the cross, your iniquities too; turn zealously to repentance, confessing your sins before His priest as before Himself, that you may be justified, after which, if the minister of the sacrament of penitence finds you prepared and fit, draw nigh to the holy cup and you shall be cleansed of your sins: peace shall flow into your soul like a river, and you shall be the son of the heavenly Father, "who was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."[1]

Do not be irritated with him who bears malice against you and often wounds you by finding fault with you, but be compassionate to him, love him, saying: It is not he or she that is so full of malice against me, but it is the Devil who rages against me through them, and they themselves, poor creatures, are only tempted by him. As soon as this temptation ceases they will be kind again. We are all often worthy of pity as the tools of the bodiless enemy. We must pity mankind, so violently persecuted by the enemy.

There is sometimes such hardened unfeelingness in the soul that you do not perceive and do not feel your sins. You do not fear either death or the Judge, or the terrible judgment-seat; you do not care a jot, as the saying is, about anything spiritual. O cunning, proud, evil flesh! It is not without reason that even the saints complain: "I am overcome by the slumber of sloth, and the sleep of sin oppresses my heart. Avail thyself, my soul, of the time for repentance; shake off the heavy sleep of sloth, and hasten to watch." Sometimes your soul is filled with such terrible slothfulness and hardened unfeelingness that you completely despair of being able to drive away this slothfulness and

[1] St. Luke xv. 24, 32.

unfeelingness. It seems as if bodily sickness would be preferable to such spiritual slothfulness.

"Thy will be done." For instance, when you wish and by every means endeavour to be well and healthy, and yet remain ill, then say: "Thy will be done." When you undertake something and your undertaking does not succeed, say: "Thy will be done." When you do good to others, and they repay you by evil, say: "Thy will be done." Or when you would like to sleep and are overtaken by sleeplessness, say: "Thy will be done." In general, do not become irritated when anything is not done in accordance with your will, but learn to submit in everything to the Will of the Heavenly Father. You would like not to experience any temptations, and yet the enemy daily harasses you by them; provokes and annoys you by every means. Do not become irritated and angered, but say: "Thy will be done."

Everything, the merest trifles, even the smoke of a candle blowing on him, irritates and angers the impatient man, because he is very self-loving, and cares much for the welfare and comfort of his carnal man, which he ought oftener to crucify in different ways. When the soul is sullied by sins and passions, seeing this, he does not see; knowing it, he does not know; feeling it, he as though does not feel; but, as soon as the face of the same man is sullied by smoke, however little, he at once notices it, and begins to pity himself, though there is nothing for him to trouble about, for the smoke does not strike, does not sting, does not vex, but only blows in the face like a light breeze.

If you wish to live long on the earth, do not hurry to live in a carnal manner, to satiate yourself, to get drunk, to smoke, to commit fornication, to live in luxury, to indulge yourself. The carnal way of life constitutes death, and therefore, in the Holy Scripture, our flesh is called mortal, or, "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."[1] If you wish to live long, live through the spirit; for life consists in the spirit: "If ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live,"[2] both here on earth and there in heaven. Observe temperance and simplicity in food and drink; preserve chastity; do not foolishly squander the balsam of your life; do not seek after riches, after luxury; strive to be contented with little; keep peace with all, and do not envy anyone—respect and love all; and, above all, strive

[1] Ephesians iv. 22. [2] Romans viii. 13.

ever to bear Christ in your heart, and you shall live in peace and felicity for many years.

My brothers and sisters who are zealous after piety! it may happen to you to hear, perhaps not seldom, and mostly from the members of your household, that you are a disagreeable, intolerable person. You will meet with serious dislike, enmity, on account of your piety, although those who are inimical to you would not acknowledge that their enmity is directed against you on account of your piety. Do not be disturbed at this, do not fall into despair; because the Devil can in reality exaggerate to an enormous extent some of your infirmities, from which you, being human, are not exempt; but remember the words of the Saviour: "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."[1] Correct yourself of your faults and hold fast to piety. Commit your conscience, your life, and deeds unto God, Who knows our hearts. However, look upon yourself impartially. Are you not indeed difficult in your character, especially to those of your household? Perhaps you are morose, unkind, unsociable, taciturn. Expand your heart for sociability and kindness, though not to over-indulgence and connivance; be gentle, not provoking, calm in reproof. "Let all your things be done with charity,"[2] said the Apostle. Be patient; do not find fault for everything. Bear some things, passing them by in silence and appear not to see them. "Charity beareth all things . . . endureth all things."[3] Sometimes through an impatient reproof enmity arises because the reproof was not made in the spirit of meekness and love, but in the spirit of self-loving pretension to the submission of others.

Sometimes younger people, or those of equal station, or older ones, teach you by means of hints which you cannot endure, and you are vexed with your teachers. We must endure and listen with love to everything useful coming from anyone, whoever he may be. Our self-love conceals our faults from us, but they are more visible to others. This is why they remark them to us. Remember, that "we are members one of another,"[4] and are thus even obliged to mutually correct each other. If you do not bear being instructed by others, and are vexed with those who teach you, it means that you are proud, and this shows that the fault of which others hint that you should correct yourself is really in you.

As God is an all-righteous Spirit, therefore His laws and commandments are the same as He Himself, for His right-

[1] St. Matthew x. 36. [2] 1 Corinthians xvi. 14.
[3] 1 Corinthians xiii. 7. [4] Ephesians iv. 25.

eousness is expressed in them. It is because of this that the Lord says: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words" (My commandments). "He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings. If ye love Me, keep My commandments."[1]

Pray for the departed as though your own soul were in hell, in the flame, and as though you yourself were in torment; feel their torments with your whole heart and pray most fervently, most ardently that they may rest in peace in the place of light and green pastures, in the place of refreshing.

Call upon the saints with faith unshamed and love unfeigned if you wish them to hear you and fulfil your prayer. Remember that like seeks after like. The saints have themselves pleased God by their faith and love, and wish to see the same in you. To faith and love add also the reverence due to them.

A self-loving man spares himself for the good of others. He even grudges his throat for the instruction of others, if he is a teacher or a priest. He grudges his whole heart, because he, so to say, serves his neighbour only with half his heart, and sometimes even quite without any heart. He grudges his physical powers, too; he is as frightened as a hare, and, being afraid of falling ill from work, prefers to take rest.

Faith in God, as in Him Who exists, is the source of life for the soul. How can we represent Him Who exists to ourselves? Count everything visible and invisible as nothing, and represent to yourself that the Lord alone is.

In order to petition the king or any other illustrious personage, or anyone else, it is necessary to reach him, to see him, and to stand before him face to face. But here on earth persons are often at a distance, places are at a distance; sometimes it is necessary to pass many persons to go a long way. But in order to reach the heavenly King or the heavenly Queen, the Mother of God, or the angels and saints, it is only necessary to pass by and put aside a mass of unbelief; to vacate the soul of the passions; to take as companions lively faith, zeal and love—and then we shall reach and can boldly pray to the Lord, or to the most pure Mother of God, or to the angels and saints.

No mental work can be accomplished without some preconceived plan, after the likeness of the All-creating Lord, Who first conceived the world and its plan, and afterwards created the universe through His Son, and accomplished it by the Holy

[1] St. John xiv. 15, 23, 24.

Ghost. It would be presumptuous to write a work without a certain plan. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?"[1] It is necessary to see beforehand with the eyes of the understanding the whole of the work, with all its principal ideas. To do the reverse would be to go by an unknown road with our eyes voluntarily bound.

Pray to the Lord for the repose of the souls of your departed forefathers, fathers and brothers, daily in the morning and in the evening, in order that the remembrance of death may live in you, and that hope in the future life, after death, may not be extinguished in you, and that your spirit may be daily humbled by the thought of the transitoriness of your life.

Also daily invoke the glorified saints, that they may enlighten your way by their prayers, and that they may intercede for the forgiveness of your sins; and that you yourself may remember that after death there is eternal glorification and bliss for good deeds, and eternal condemnation for evil ones.

Sometimes during prayer you feel a kind of estrangement from God, and despair. Do not be carried away by such a feeling; it proceeds from the Devil. Say in your heart: "I despair not of salvation, reprobate as I am; and emboldened by Thine immeasurable compassion, I come unto Thee. If there is any hope of salvation for me, if Thy loving mercy can overcome the multitude of my transgressions, be Thou my Saviour."[2]

When during oral prayer the Devil gnaws at your words by a multitude of most subtle thoughts, say: "The power of the Saviour is in every word and in every sound."

"Hast thou not known, . . . believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?"[3] Do you not know that during prayer the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are in you and you in Them?

When, during the reading of the canons and Acathistos to the Saviour, to the Mother of God, and to the Guardian Angel, or during the reading of other prayers, the Devil whispers to your heart: "This is untrue, untrue this is—strained, forced," and thus robs your heart of the power (the truth) of the words of prayer, then be "like a deaf man . . . that heareth not; a fool, that he

[1] St. Luke xiv. 28; St. Matthew vii. 24.
[2] First and Fourth Prayers before Holy Communion.
[3] St. John xiv. 9, 10.

may be wise."[1] Do not for a moment agree in your heart with the falsehood of the enemy, or reason with his infernal reasoning, but believe firmly in the truth of all the Church prayers and hymns of praise in all their fulness, knowing that they are the words of the Holy Ghost, proclaiming through the mouth of holy men the praises due to the Saviour, to the Mother of God, and to the saints. Bear in mind also our infirmities and ungodliness. Remember that "the Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth."[2]

Every priest is an apostle in his village or parish, and ought to go about to the different houses preaching the Kingdom of God, instructing the ignorant, awakening the careless, who are living in the passions and carnal desires, to a Christian life; encouraging and stimulating, by the hope of future recompense, those who are pious and sober-minded; strengthening and comforting the discontented. This ought specially to be the object of processions with the cross on festivals. Sometimes we priests allow ourselves to eat and drink when going about with the cross. This should not be. We must preach with the cross in our hand that "Christ came upon earth in order to raise us up to heaven"[3]; that it is not right to attach ourselves to anything earthly; and that we must value time in order to win eternity; to cleanse our hearts from every impurity, and to do as many good works as possible: "My meat is to do the will of Him That sent Me, and to finish His work."[4]

What means the heavy sleep of slothfulness and hardened unfeelingness of heart during prayer, or during the preparation of some sermon, or during the teaching of religion? It means that the grace of God is leaving us, by God's wise and good intention, in order to strengthen our hearts for our own free spiritual exertions. Sometimes grace carries us like children or guides and supports us as though by the hand. Then it is twice as easy for us to do works of virtue; whilst sometimes it leaves us alone to our weakness, in order that we should not become slothful, but should labour, and by our labour become worthy of the gift of grace. At such times we ought, as free beings, to spontaneously show our amendment and zeal to God. It would be foolish to murmur against God for depriving us of His grace; for when the Lord pleases He takes away His grace from us, fallen and unworthy creatures. At such times we must learn patience and bless the Lord: "The Lord gave [His grace], and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."[5]

[1] Psalm xxxviii. 14; 1 Corinthians iii. 18.
[2] 1 Timothy iii. 15.
[3] Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus viii.
[4] St. John iv. 34.
[5] Job i. 21.

During times of slothfulness and hardness of heart, men, sometimes through their faint-heartedness and impatience, become too familiar with God, and allow themselves various eccentricities in their voice and movements signifying impatience, dissatisfaction, murmuring, and even insolence towards God. Guard against this by every means, and endeavour to overcome your slothfulness. You must conquer the enemy and your passions.

If you wish to be humble, consider yourself worthy of all malice and hatred on the part of others, and of every calumny. Do not grow irritated, and do not nourish malice against those who bear malice against you, slander you, or falsely blame you. Say: "Holy Father, Thy will be done!" Remember the words of the Lord: "The servant is not greater than his Lord; if the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you."[1] If the world hated Him, the Most-righteous, the Most-merciful, then why should it be wonderful if other people hate you, a sinful and evil man?

When you ask the Lord to enlighten your mind and warm your heart so that you may write a sermon, or a letter to your parents, relations, or friends, and the Lord does not seem to hear you, and you remain in darkness and coldness, do not grow faint-hearted, do not despond, do not be indignant, do not murmur at the Lord's inattention to you; for the Lord only tests your patience, your faith and hope, your devotion to Him, the Almighty. Remember that it is easy for Him to instantaneously illuminate and enlighten you, and in a few minutes you will be able to write an excellent sermon or a letter, ardent with warm feeling, full of light and elevated thoughts.

"We would have come unto you once and again, but Satan hindered us."[2] From this we see that it is Satan who sometimes hinders our seeing each other or writing to our relations, friends, or acquaintances. How infirm is man of himself! How limited he is! It is not only God Who does not allow him to do what he wishes, but even Satan forbids him.

Indulgence of the flesh, hardened unfeelingness to everything spiritual, sacred, is the oppression of the enemy, although the carnal man does not consider it to be oppression, because he favours it; but those who desire to live a spiritual life look upon it as oppression, because it does not admit God into their hearts, does not allow the grace of God to be poured into the heart, quickening and enlightening it, because such oppression makes

[1] St. John xiii. 16; xv. 18. [2] 1 Thessalonians ii. 18.

the soul unfruitful for deeds of faith, hope, and love. At such times we become somehow carnal, as though having no spirit. O, how manifold are the various persecutions of the enemy! How truly we should grieve from the depths of our hearts at this hardened unfeelingness; how we should lament before the Lord: it will thus pass away, and the heart will be warmed and softened, and become capable of spiritual contemplation and holy feelings.

When you pray either aloud or to your yourself for others—for instance, for the members of your household or for strangers, even though they may not have asked you to do so—pray for them with the same ardour and zeal as you would pray for yourself. Remember the commandment of the law: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[1] Observe this rule upon all occasions—that is, love your neighbour as yourself. Do not try to deal cunningly with the Lord, "that triest the reins and the heart,"[2] lest He should despise your prayer as vain and lying.

Love does not suffer self-justification, does not exalt itself, is not puffed up.

When we read any prayers for the first time, or read them seldom, then, on account of their novelty, we read them willingly, with deep feeling, but afterwards the more often we repeat them, the less we care for them; they cease to interest us, and it is with difficulty that we constrain ourselves to read them with the previous feeling. In reference to prayer, the following are the measures to be taken against this:—We must represent to ourselves that we are for the first time saying these beautiful prayers to which we have grown accustomed, but which so deeply interested us when we first read them; we must think with our whole heart over every word of the prayer, and value every word. This phenomenon in our soul is the consequence of original sin—the consequence of our original instability in the truth. And until now we cannot be firmly stablished in the truth: as soon as we stand we begin to waver again. As this often happens in regard to prayer, so it does also in regard to faith, to our friendship with other men, to our love for God and our neighbour, and in general to virtue: everywhere we show ourselves unstable in truth.

Also it sometimes happens during prayer that our heart becomes impiously ashamed before men of the words of the

[1] St. Matthew xix. 19; xxii. 39; Leviticus xix. 18.
[2] Jeremiah xi. 20; Revelation ii. 23; Psalm vii. 10.

prayer or of the Lord God Himself, and we pronounce the words of the prayer listlessly, not from the whole heart. We must vanquish this ungodly, man-pleasing, diabolical shame and fear, and say the prayers from our whole soul loudly, in all simplicity of heart, representing God alone before us, and counting all else as not existing. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."[1] If you consider anything visible to be important and great except the Lord God, and neglect Him, Who alone exists, Who alone is great, then you are most impiously arrogant. Reckon everything as nothing in comparison to the Lord, and cling to Him alone.

Man is dear to the Lord, the whole world is obedient to him. The Son of God Himself came down from heaven on earth to save him from everlasting torments, to reconcile him with God. All fruits, the various flesh of animals, were given to him for food, and various drinks were given to him to please his taste—but not to excite his passions, not for his only enjoyment, for the Christian has great, spiritual, Divine enjoyments. Carnal delights must be always made subject to these higher ones; they must be restrained or completely suppressed when they hinder spiritual delights. This signifies that it is not to afflict man that food and drink are temporarily forbidden him by the Church, not to limit his freedom, as worldly people say, but it is done in order to afford him true, lasting, and eternal delights; therefore meat or flesh food, and wine and spirits, are forbidden (during Lent), specially by reason of the fact that man is very dear to God, and in order that his heart should cling to God alone, and not to anything perishable, unworthy of him. But man, perverted by sins, easily attaches himself to earthly pleasures, forgetting that his true enjoyment, his true life, is the eternal God, and not the pleasant excitation of the flesh.

The heart's attention and its understanding are gradually deadened in those who do not pray fervently, not from their whole heart; who, seeing, do not see, and, hearing, do not understand,[2] the words of the prayer. "For a pretence, they make long prayers," and, poor creatures, do not think that for increasing the number of their words they "shall receive greater damnation."[3]

Do you not mock at the faults of your neighbour; do you not despise him; do you not nourish hatred against him on account

[1] St. Mark viii. 38. [2] St. Luke viii. 10. [3] St. Mark xii. 40.

of them? "Charity beareth all things." Remember this, and bear with the faults and iniquities of your brother, that God may bear with yours. Have patience with the infirm members, for we are all one body in the Lord.

Live with your heart the words of the Saviour's prayer to His Father: "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us,"[1] and strive by every means to become united to God yourself, and to unite others to Him. Maintain by every means mutual, pious union, not sparing either yourself or anything belonging to you, for the sake of maintaining the union of love. For God is our almighty Life-giver, and the all-merciful Giver of all things. He will support our life in our labours for our neighbour's benefit, if necessary, and will give us everything needful, if we spend our property for the sake of maintaining mutual love.

As Christ dwells wholly in every smallest particle of the Body and Blood, so also He dwells wholly in every good thought and word.

If you truly wish to be humble, then long for every offence and persecution, as a hungry man longs for food; for by the justice of God you are worthy of this.

If you wish to be truly humble, then consider yourself lower than all, worthy of being trampled on by all; for you yourself daily, hourly trample upon the law of the Lord, and therefore upon the Lord Himself.

When your heart is struck by the enemy nestling within you, and causing in you disturbance, straitness, and depression of spirit, do not then preach a sermon, lest, instead of profit, it should give rise to temptation; lest, instead of spiritual nourishment, it should cause spiritual dizziness and sickness. Neither administer any reproofs at such times: these would only irritate, and not correct. In general, when the enemy nestles in your soul, it is better to be more silent; we are then unworthy of the word, which is the gift of the Hypostatic Word. First drive out the enemy, bring peace to dwell in your heart, and then speak.

The one incomplex Spirit in the three Persons, the one single Wisdom in the three Persons, brought everything into existence from non-existence. The one single Wisdom in the three Persons—God!

[1] St. John xvii. 21.

Some believe that their whole welfare and their exactitude before God consists in the reading of all the appointed prayers, without paying attention to the preparedness of their hearts for prayer to God, nor to their inward amendment. Many, for instance, thus read the prayers appointed before Holy Communion; whilst at this time we should, above all, look to the amendment and preparedness of the heart to receive the Holy Sacrament. If your heart is right in your bosom; if, by God's mercy, it is ready to meet the Bridegroom, then, thank God, it is well with you, even although you have not succeeded in reading all the appointed prayers. "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."[1] Obedience to our mother, the Church, in everything is right; and if it is possible for one "to receive" prolonged prayer, let him pray long. But "all men cannot receive this saying."[2] If long prayer is not compatible with fervour of spirit, then it is better to say a short but fervent prayer. Remember that the one word of the publican, said from a fervent heart, justified him. God does not look at the multitude of words, but upon the disposition of the heart. The chief thing is lively faith and fervent repentance for sins.

Severe frosts and sudden violent thaws visibly show, upon a small scale, that the Lord has made everything, the whole universe, and that He can destroy everything when it pleases Him to do so. The covering of the rivers, lakes, and seas with ice, and their breaking up, shows the same; also the blossoming of the flowers, the growth of earthly plants in the spring and summer, and their destruction in the autumn; also the birth and death of man. The Lord has created us. It is His also to destroy us.

The prayer of a priest for men has great power with God, if only the priest calls upon the Lord with his whole heart, with faith and love. God grant that there may be more priests who would pray to God with an ardent spirit, for who should pray to the Lord for His sheep with such power, if not the priest, who has received grace and authority to do so from God Himself?

When you pray with tears and love for the Lord's sheep, and your thoughts praise you to yourself, then say to them: It is not I who prayed for God's people, but the "Spirit itself" within me "maketh intercession" for them "with groanings which cannot be uttered"[3]: and the Spirit bound me, too, at that time, in the sweet bonds of His love and of heartfelt

[1] 1 Corinthians iv. 20. [2] St. Matthew xix. 11. [3] Romans viii. 26.

devotion. That this is true is evident from the fact, that the sweetness of prayer and love can very soon forsake me.

The truth of Christ's Mysteries is vouched for by Christ Himself. The truth is further proved by the visible and invisible worlds, created and upheld in their existence by Him, by the cleansing from sins, and by the peace and joy of heart that we experience after communion.

"Charity is not easily provoked," whilst you are often provoked. Mind, the enemy at this time uses his craft against you, for during anger faith in God is extinguished, and boldness before God is lost.

The images of worldly vanity, upon which we have looked with entire pleasure and hearty sympathy, effeminate, weaken, and disturb the soul; they deprive us of purity of heart and of boldness before God; therefore it is well not to frequent theatres, not to attend worldly, gay, and splendid assemblies, not to see those who are turning round in whirling dances, not to look at worldly sights representing the multifarious vanities of this world. It is good to constantly hold fast by God alone;[1] in the world there are so many enticements that the eye is not satisfied with seeing.

"Hallowed be Thy name!" This is our first desire and our first petition, that the name of God should be hallowed in us and through us. Let us remember that we are created after the image and likeness of the Lord God, after the likeness of His holiness; but alas, we sinned, we lost holiness, and are now born in sins and iniquities; we live in sins and iniquities like "bastards, and not sons."[2] What other care should then now occupy us in our fallen state but the care to become like unto the Heavenly Father, our Prototype? The Lord Himself requires this of us; "Be ye holy, for I am holy."[3] This ought to be our first desire and the purpose of our whole life. The second petition is the explanation of the first.

Our heart daily dies spiritually. Only ardent, tearful prayer quickens it, and makes it begin to breathe again. If we do not daily pray with sufficient spiritual fervour, we may easily and speedily die spiritually.

Sometimes during prayer the intellect becomes puffed up and the words of the prayer do not find a place in it on account

[1] Psalm lxxiii. 27. [2] Hebrews xii. 8.
[3] 1 Peter i. 16; Leviticus xix. 2.

of its carnality and falsehood; but still the words of the prayer are spirit and truth, the molten silver, proceeding from the soul, burning with faith and love, "which from the earth is tried and purified seven times in the fire." "The ungodly walk around them,"[1] not going into the depths of their meaning.

The insensibility of the heart during prayer to the truth of the words of the prayer, proceeds from the heart's unbelief and insensibility, of its sinfulness, and these, in their turn, emanate from a secret feeling of pride. In accordance with the measure of his feelings during prayer a man recognises whether he is proud or humble; the more feeling the more ardent the prayer is, the more humble he is; whilst the more unfeeling and cold it is, the prouder he is.

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."[2] This is so both in moral and dogmatical respects. He who teaches all the truths soundly, but transgresses against any one of them, he shall be found guilty of all, or against the one Truth, indivisible in Its being; that is, against the Lord Jesus Christ, Who said: "I am the Truth."[3] Wherefore? Because God is an incomplex, though an infinite Being. Even a single wicked thought is "an abomination to the Lord."[4] He who transgresses against the truth of dogmas, transgresses against Him Who said of Himself: "I am the Truth."

Never despair in God's mercy by whatever sins you may have been bound by the temptation of the Devil, but pray with your whole heart, with the hope of forgiveness; knock at the door of God's mercy and it shall be opened unto you. I, a simple priest, am an example for you: however I may sometimes sin by the action of the Devil, for instance, by enmity towards a brother, whatever the cause may be, even though it may be a right cause, and I myself become thoroughly disturbed and set my brother against me, and unworthily celebrate the Holy Sacrament, not from wilful neglect, but by being myself unprepared, and by the action of the Devil; yet, after repentance, the Lord forgives all, and everything, especially after the worthy communion of the Holy Sacrament: I become white as snow, or as a wave of the sea, by the blood of Christ; the most heavenly peace dwells in my heart; it becomes light, so light, and I feel beatified. Then, indeed, I forget all troubles, anxieties, and the oppression of the enemy, I become entirely renewed, and as though risen from the dead. Do not then despair, brethren,

[1] Psalm xii. 7, 9. The last verse is given according to the Slavonic version.
[2] James ii. 10. [3] St. John xiv. 6. [4] Proverbs xv. 26.

whatever sins you may have committed, only repent and confess them with a contrite heart and humble spirit. Glory, O Lord, to Thy mercy! Glory, O Lord, to Thy long-suffering and forbearance!

"Love one another with a pure heart fervently."[1] Remember these words of the apostle, and act in accordance with them. Forgive them that trespass against you, knowing that as the enemy disturbs you and sometimes sets you at enmity against others, so he also disturbs and sets them against you. Love and pity your enemies, as those who have gone astray. "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."[2]

Be moderate in all religious works, for moderation, even in virtue, correspondingly to your powers, according to circumstances of time, place, and preceding labour, is prudent and wise. It is well, for instance, to pray with a pure heart, but as soon as there is no correspondence between the prayer and your powers (energy), with the various circumstances of place and time, with your preceding labours, then it ceases to be a virtue. Therefore the apostle Peter says, "Add to virtue knowledge" (that is, do not be carried away by the heart only); "and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience."[3]

"He that gathereth not with Me scattereth."[4] It is necessary to advance in the spiritual life, and ascend higher and higher; to increase more and more the stores of our good works. If we remain stationary at one point of moral perfection, upon one step of the Christian ascent, it is equal to our going back; if we do not gather, it is equal to scattering.

Do not grudge burning a wax taper before the icon of the Lord during prayer; remember that you burn it before the inaccessible Light and before Him Who enlightens you with His light. Your candle is as though a burnt offering to the Lord; let it be a gift to God from your whole heart; let it remind you that you yourself should also be a burning and shining light. "He was," it is said of John the Forerunner, "a burning and a shining light."[5]

The Lord, with all His infinity, is at the same time such an incomplex Being, that He is wholly in the single name of the Holy Trinity, or in the name of the Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ.

[1] 1 Peter i. 22. [2] 1 Peter iii. 9. [3] 2 Peter i. 5, 6.
[4] St. Luke xi. 23. [5] St. John v. 35.

Who of mortals is worthy of the Lord? He, to whom everything, except the Creator, is nothing, to whom the Creator is everything. O man! let not your heart cleave to anything but the Creator. Cling to Him in the simplicity of your heart. Let neither food, nor dress, nor any human creature, nor riches, nor the comforts of this life, nor the glory of this world, nor anything worldly tempt you.

I bring to the Lord, to Our Lady, or to an Angel or Saint, material light, in order that the Lord may bestow the light of grace, spiritual light, upon me through their prayers, that He may lead me out from the darkness of sin into the light of the knowledge of God and virtue; I bring material fire that the fire of the grace of the Holy Ghost may be kindled in my heart, and that it may extinguish the fire of the passions in my miserable heart; I bring a light with the desire that I may become a light myself, burning and shining to all that are in the temple. These are the reasons why I place candles before the icons; such are my thoughts when I put candles in the candlesticks. I acknowledge that I place these candles before the icons with the hope of receiving spiritual blessings from those holy and all-holy persons who are represented upon them; I acknowledge this spiritual love of gain. But it is the law of reciprocity to expect a gift for a gift. "With what measure ye mete," it is said, "it shall be measured to you again."[1] I am an infirm, carnal, sinful man—they are welcome to all I have; not being always able to bring to my Lord, to His most pure Mother, to an Angel of God, or to a Saint, a heart burning with faith and love, I bring, at least, as a carnal, material man, a material gift as a gift to heaven, a lighted candle. May the Lord look down from heaven upon this little gift of my zeal, and may He give me more in return. He alone is rich, and enriches all, whilst I am poor and needy; He is surrounded with inaccessible light, I am in darkness; I am of little faith, may He grant me the gift of faith; I am poor in love, may He enrich my heart with this priceless heavenly treasure; I am powerless for all good, may He give me the power. On my part there is the desire for heavenly blessings, and there is a material pledge of this; may the all-endowing Lord grant to me, by the prayers of His most pure Mother and those of the Angels and Saints, "all things that I ask that are profitable unto salvation."

When anyone blames the imperfections and faults of your works, humbly acknowledge the justice of such censure, and say: "Yes, it is true, I am sinful, most sinful, I do not do my work with due care and willingness. Pray for me, brother"—(saying

[1] St. Matthew vii. 2.

thus to him who blames you)—"that the Lord may teach and help me, by His grace, to fulfil the duties of my calling and the work of serving others with due care and willingness." Should anyone find fault with your abilities, say: "I do not give myself such and not other abilities, they are the gift of God; therefore to find fault with my abilities is the same as to find fault with the Creator, Who gave them." When your own relations blame you and expose your weaknesses in the hearing of others, say to them: "I am truly such as you describe me; but it is no advantage to you that I am really such, nor that you should defame me and mock at me: to mock at the infirmity or weakness of your brother is foolish and inhuman; it is better to hide such an infirmity, because my infirmity is your infirmity, my shame is your shame; for I am your member, and you, too, are not without infirmity; let us, therefore, pray that the Lord may heal our infirmities, for all of us are infected with the leprosy of iniquity." "Charity," it is said, "endureth all things,"[1] and does not put weaknesses to shame.

Great are our negligence and slothfulness in prayer: we are always inclined to pray, and often do pray; anyhow, in order to finish quickly, we hurry, we skip, and do not look into the depths of our hearts. Therefore our prayer is like the wind: it makes a noise, passes away, and that is all.

When the darkness of the accursed one covers you—doubt, despondency, despair, disturbance—then only call with your whole heart upon the sweetest name of Jesus Christ, and in Him you shall find all—light, strengthening, trust, comfort, and peace; in Him you shall find the greatest mercy, goodness and bountifulness; all these mercies you will find contained in His name alone, as though in a rich treasury.

I have received and receive everything from the Lord; how, then, shall I not turn to Him alone, with my prayer for everything that I need? How shall I not hope to receive everything from Him alone? I have received from Him life and all things. He alone can give me everything that is necessary to me for my temporal and eternal welfare. It is, so to say, His business to give me everything necessary: such is His merciful and bountiful nature.

Believe and hope to promptly obtain from the Lord everything good for raising up your neighbour, or all things profitable, "unto salvation." Do not hesitate, and do not doubt even for a single moment, in the possibility of receiving what you pray for.

[1] 1 Corinthians xiii. 7.

"With God all things are possible, and all things are possible to him that believeth; and hope maketh not ashamed."[1] It is only the unbelief, the mistrust of our heart, that makes us ashamed.

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."[2] What grief! He is straitened on every side: he sorrows for his son, but he has no faith in his heart: it is impossible for him not to weep. And thus he says with tears: "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief!" It is the same with us: when misfortune threatens us, and there is not the faith in our heart to avert the misfortune, then how shall we not weep over our double misfortune! And yet many have a heart of stone and do not feel the necessity of faith for their deliverance from misfortune.

"And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions."[3] We, too, often become sad and weak in heart and body at a single word, asking a sacrifice of us for the sake of the heavenly kingdom, although we were brave enough before.

Why is the Creed sung before the transubstantiation of the Holy Gifts? Why does the priest also say the Creed to himself inside the altar at the same time? In order that those present should believe and remember that the Holy Trinity takes part in the act of the transubstantiation of the Holy Gifts, and that the mystery of the Eucharist is the work of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; in order also that the priest himself may celebrate the Holy Sacrament without condemnation and with undoubting faith in the mercy and omnipotence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and afterwards, at the proper time, communicate of it; for at this time especially great faith is required of the priest, as then, above all, the enemy uses all his efforts to strike his mind and heart with coldness and unbelief, or to disturb him by doubt.

It is the wonder of wonders that my Lord and Creator was pleased to create anew and change my nature corrupted by sins, in the same way as He changes the bread and wine into His Body and Blood; in the same way as He changed the fire into dew.

Whomsoever you wish to pray to, before praying, first ask in your heart that you may be made worthy of offering Him

[1] St. Matthew xix. 26; St. Mark ix. 23; x. 27; Romans v. 5.
[2] St. Mark ix. 24.
[3] St. Mark x. 22.

your heartfelt prayer, praise, or thanksgiving, for we can only pray by the strengthening of the Holy Ghost, and by the strengthening of those saints, through whose intercession we wish to pray to the Saviour. Raise to Him before your prayer or praise a heartfelt voice, that He may grant you the grace of sincere prayer, that He may lay His easy yoke and His light burden on your heart, that they may destroy the diabolical pride and resistance of your mind and heart. If you wish to pray to Our Lady, call upon Her that She may make you worthy of offering Her your prayer, praise, or thanksgiving from the whole heart, unfeignedly. If you wish to pray to an angel, ask the Lord to make you deserving of worthily offering him your prayer, or of hymning the grace, brightness, and goodness of his nature; if to a saint, invoke the Holy Ghost, by Whose holiness the saints are sanctified, that you may worthily call upon him or ascribe praises and thanksgivings to him; for we all can only pray worthily and vivifyingly through the strengthening of the life-giving Holy Ghost. God's saints are the pure breathings of the Holy Ghost. "The wind (the Spirit) bloweth where it listeth."[1] (That is, He breathes in any soul He pleases.) The Holy Virgin was superabundantly sanctified and purified by the Holy Ghost. The angels, too, are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and live and breathe by Him, as we live by the flesh and breathe by means of air. Prayers, in their true aspect, are nothing else but the breathing of the Holy Ghost. "The Spirit Itself," it is said, "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."[2]

In the present time learned men have erected, and are erecting, an enormous idol, and command all to worship it, worshipping it themselves also. This idol is the literature of denial, the impure spirit moving us, the proud, impious, unbelieving intellect. The Devil is cunning, O how cunning! He has invented even in Christianity a refined idolatry, corresponding with the direction and spirit of the age and with the degree of its mental development. What an evil, crafty being! How he perverts poor humanity that has withdrawn itself from hearty faith in Christ! How powerfully he draws men into hell by means of ropes woven by the men themselves! My God! my God! He destroys us by means of our own intellect, which ought to lead us to the eternal, living God! With our own ladles he draws for us the deadly water of worldly, elementary, and vain wisdom, and gives us and other men to drink of it, instead of the living water of the Word of God! And we

[1] St. John iii. 8. [2] Romans viii. 26.

drink and drink of it, without suspecting that it is the water of death.

Remember that to God man is a great, precious being, but that this great creature, after having fallen into sin, became an infirm creature, subject to thousands of weaknesses. Love him, honour him, but at the same time bear with his infirmities, weaknesses, passions, and actions. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour"—one sinner the other sinner—"as thyself."[1] "Bear the infirmities of the weak, and so fulfil the law of Christ."[2] Great are these words: ponder them deeply. They have the same meaning as the words of the Lord's Prayer: "We forgive them that trespass against us."

Great and worthy of honour is the body of the Holy Church, Whose Head is Jesus Christ Himself. Remember that in this great and worthily honoured body you are an infirm, worthless member, and that you receive everything from the Head of the body of the Church, Christ, and are animated by His Spirit. Remember that in the Church there are millions of powerful members, who have received great and manifold spiritual gifts from the Holy Ghost, each in accordance with his special merit and receptivity. Respect every Christian as a member of the Church of Christ and the temple of the Holy Ghost; do not in your pride consider anyone as ignorant of the truths of the faith, deprived of the gifts of the Spirit: "For Christ is all, and in all,"[3] and the Lord inwardly reveals Himself to all, enlightens all, according to the measure of the receptivity of each one, and apportions His gifts to all, without respect of persons. And therefore, say to yourself: "I am a small member of the great and worthily honoured body of the Church, I must regard all the other members with love and respect, as dear and beloved members of my Christ."

When we are reproached for anything by others, it should not irritate us nor make us despondent, but it should humble us, being morally worthless, and should make us turn to God with the fervent prayer that He may heal our infirmities and by His grace supply us with that which is wanting in us. To grow irritated, especially when we are reproached with weaknesses, really existing in us, would be only adding one malady to another, one passion to another; it would mean that we are sick with the voluntary blindness of self-love, which does not wish to see its own dark side, and leads to voluntary destruction. To despond is also most foolish, for by the help of God's grace the Christian

[1] St. Matthew xix. 19. [2] Romans xv. 1; Galatians vi. 2.
[3] Colossians iii. 11.

can always change for the better if he wishes; and it is for this purpose that the Lord sends us accusers, in order that they may open our spiritual eyes, and that we may see the deformity of our deeds, and seeing, correct ourselves, but not for the purpose of casting us into despondency. Despondency is itself a sin and the work of the Devil. Reproof ought to produce in us the "godly sorrow, which worketh repentance to salvation," [1] and not the sorrow of self-love.

[1] 2 Corinthians vii. 10.

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